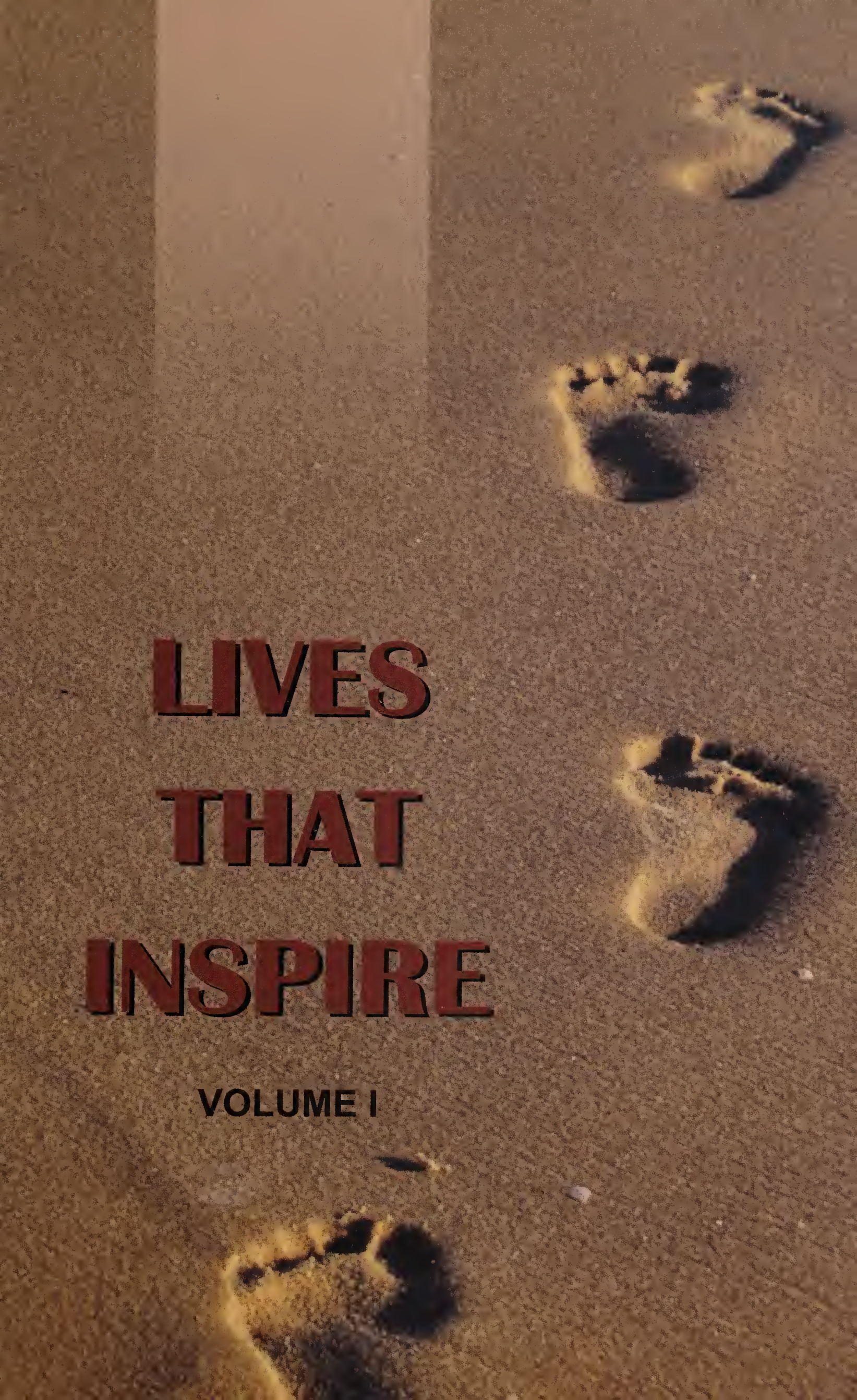


A photograph of a sandy beach with several footprints. A vertical white line, possibly a painted stripe, runs down the left side of the frame. The footprints are scattered across the sand, with some being more distinct than others. The overall tone is warm and textured.

LIVES THAT INSPIRE

VOLUME I

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PREFACE

NATION-building is a long drawn-out process. A nation can be compared with the human mind. The mind is impacted upon by various kinds of influences, which are sometimes similar, at times complement each other and mutually contradictory at some other point of time. Nation-building is not done by a few prominent personalities, but it is the nation which shapes these personalities. Indeed, once moulded, the personality itself exercises its own impact on the nation. The biggest force that creates history is the people. Great men are those who guide the people on to the path of progress. Though the loftiest thoughts lie dormant in books, the colossal personality of these figures transforms these ideas into a vehicle of change.

This collection comprises life-sketches of such great personalities of India, whose thoughts not only influenced the society during their times but are a source of inspiration for the country even today. All these great names are indelibly associated with the honour and identity of our country.



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MAHAVIRA

—Yugjeet Nawalpuri

Two thousand and five hundred years ago, in the present North Bihar, there existed the Panchayati Republic of Lichhaavis. It was spread from the Tarai in Nepal to Ganga and from the Kosi to Rapti river. The capital of this Union was Vaishali, which is now known as Basaad. It is about 27 miles to the north of Patna.

Vaishali town consisted of three parts. To the South East was main Vaishali where the brahmin resided. To the west was commercial village and the third part was Kundagram in the North East. At present in that place is the Basukund village which is in Muzaffarpur district.

Mahavira, the twenty fourth Tirthankar of Jain religion, was born in a Kshatriya family in Kundagram. His father's name was king Siddharth and mother's name was Trishala.

It is said that when Mahavira was in the womb, Trishala saw fourteen dreams. Hearing about the dreams, the astrologers predicted that the boy would be like a flag, like a lamp, like a crown, like an auspicious mark on the forehead and like a shady tree, whose traits would be best, all body parts beautiful, would be highly learned and will complete all the tasks which he would undertake. He will be a very powerful leader of the masses and will be praised by the entire world. This meant that the boy would either be an emperor or a learned saint.

After a period of nine months and seven and a half days, Mahavira was born on the 13th day of Chaitra on the Uttara Falguni Nakshatra. King Siddharth gave away all his ornaments to the maid who gave him this auspicious news and freed her from the bondage.

Siddharth freed all the prisoners and waived off all the loans

due to his joy on Mahavira's birth. There were celebrations all around for ten days. The air was filled with songs, dances and fragrance of good food. On the third day, the child was shown the moon and the sun. His parents were awake the whole night on the sixth day. All the relatives and servants were called for a feast on the twelfth day.

The child was named Vardhaman.

Vardhaman's elder brother was Nandivardhan and elder sister was Sudarshana. The three were brought up with great love and care. Right from childhood, Vardhman was healthy, strong and brave. Once he was playing on the tree in a garden. A poisonous snake slithered up the same tree. All the boys got frightened on seeing Vardhman in danger. But Vardhman went up to the snake and threw it away. The Jains believe that the snake was some God who had come to test Vardhman's bravery.

Similarly, there is another anecdote. Vardhman was playing a game of donkey riding. In this game, the boy who loses becomes a donkey and carries the winner on his back for some distance. A God joined the game by transforming himself into a boy and intentionally lost the game. As soon as Vardhman sat on the loser boy's back, the boy started running. Had there been any other child, he would have screamed and cried, but Vardhman hit him so hard that he fell flat on his face. He apologised and said that you are 'Mahavira'-the bravest. There are several such stories about him.

When Vardhman became young, the King of Basantpur wanted to get his daughter married to him. He sent across his message to King Siddarth but Vardhman did not want to marry. However, when his mother insisted, he agreed for marriage. He married Yashoda who was the daughter of King Samarveer and Rani Padmavati of Basantpur. Sometime later, a girl was born to him. However, some people believe that he remained a bachelor and never married.

Vardhman was very active in attending to the household chores. Whatever he said, he fulfilled it. He was affable and simple in his behaviour. He had respect for elders and was very kind by nature. But he stayed away from the worldly matters and temptations. He always thought of ways to achieve the true knowledge.

His parents died when he attained twenty eight years. Now, Vardhman had all the freedom to become a monk. But his elder brother Nandivardhan stopped him. He asked him to wait for two more years to let the family overcome their grief of the parents' death.

Vardhman accepted this point. He knew how to act as per the time. He postponed his decision to become a monk for two years, but by then, he had started to live almost like a monk even at home. He pondered that people run after happiness, but all this effort is the cause of misery. This leads to violence and a man cannot go further on the path of true happiness. Hence, real happiness lies in not running after happiness.

This very concept later on became the foundation of Vardhman's religion (Dharma). Just as removal of ignorance is the principle of Vedas and removal of greed and temptation are the basic tenets of Buddhism, similarly removal of violence is the basic tenet of Jain Dharma.

Vardhman had promised his brother that he would not leave home for the next two years. But as the first year passed, he yearned to renounce his home. As a result, he donated all his share of property. Slowly, the second year also passed. Then Vardhman started his preparations for leaving home.

At the age of thirty, he became a monk. This ceremony took place with pomp and show. Thousands of men and women gathered at the Dhyutipalash garden in the town. Vardhman got rid of his beard, moustache and all the hair on his head. The elders blessed him. From here, Vardhman travelled alone and soon he crossed the Ganga and reached Kummar village. At present, this village is known as Kasmar.

After becoming a monk, he decided that he would search for the right place for meditation, remain quiet, eat out of the alms received and will never appease any householder.

From there Vardhman reached a village known as Aasthik. He removed the misconceptions about ghosts and superstitions from the minds of the people of the village. There he spent a period

of four months. From there, he went to Maurak and exposed the hypocrisy of hocus-pocus.

King Pradeshi welcomed him when he reached Shwetambi. But Vardhman did not stay there and proceeded towards Surabhipur. While crossing the river Ganga, they were caught in a strong storm. Because of the strong winds, the mast of the boat broke down and the mast was torn to pieces. However, somehow they could cross the river. The fellow travellers attributed this to Vardhman and said that their lives have been saved because he was travelling with them.

Wandering like this Vardhman reached Nalanda. He spent the next Four months there. Here he met Mokhaliputra Gosal. Gosal was amongst the seven religious reformers of that era. He was also a new monk like Vardhman and had come to spend the four month period there. Both liked each other and then wandered together for six years.

Roaming from one place to another, they reached Chorak. It was the day for them to keep silence. Both of them were meditating at an isolated place. Seeing them, the city Kotwal (security officer) thought that they were the spies of enemies. On enquiry, when they did not speak any word, he tied them with ropes and made them take dips in the well water. A big crowd assembled amongst which were two women monks named Soma and Jayanti. They recognised that one of the monks was Vardhman - the son of King Siddharth. They requested and got them released somehow.

Hence, while wandering for twelve years, Mahavira had to face many problems in his saintly life. Children used to pelt stones on seeing him naked. However, he generally remained silent and tolerated everything. He gave up cold water and fresh leafy vegetables. He had developed such control over his body that he would not itch even when he felt the itching. He never tried to wipe away the dust gathered on his body. He used to stay alone in the deserted ruins, shops of ironsmiths and carpenters, and bravely face the cold weather on piles of hay and under the trees in the forest. This way he did not sleep comfortably for twelve years. Whenever he felt sleepy, he would immediately get

up and start meditating taking a stroll. During winters he would spread his arms open and bear the cold.

During his life as a monk, he travelled far and wide. He travelled to Rajgriha, Bhagalpur, Munger, Basaad, Janakpur and other areas of Bihar. He went to places like Benaras, Koshambi, Ayodhya, Sahet-Mahet and others in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Rar and other places in Bengal. He had to bear utmost difficulties in Rar. This state was the fierce opponent of Buddhism (Shraman Dharma). The people of this place would let loose dogs at Mahavira. They used to attack him by canes, fists, stones and spears. They used to cut flesh from his body and throw it away. He was tossed up and beaten down. They used every possible way to torture him in many ways.

After a strong penance for twelve years, Mahavira attained Bodh (enlightenment) in a village named Jambhiya on the banks of Rijuvalika river on the tenth day of the month of Vaishakh.

For twelve years, bearing all the pain and staying away from the worldly matters and temptations, he practised such strong penance that he came to be known as Mahavira. He came to be also known as 'Jin' as he had controlled his senses.

After attaining knowledge, he started to preach sermons. Eleven scholars came to Apapa township for a debate. Lord Mahavira cleared all their doubts one by one. They were so impressed by him that they gave up the pride of their intelligence and became his disciples. After this, there was a stream of sermons.

Mahavira came to Rajgriha after staying in Apapa for many days. Rajgriha was the capital of Magadh. Under the influence of Mahavira, the king of Magadh, Bimbisara embraced Jainism. It was here that Sujyeshtha, the younger daughter of king Chetak, also became a monk. Mahavira initiated her and left her under the guidance of Chandana. Mahavira interacted with people in simple language. He used to explain his sermons to the people with the help of anecdotes, examples and stories which the masses could understand and enjoy. Under the influence of these sermons, many people became Jain monks. Amongst them was Maghkumar, the son of King Bimbisara. This very sermon of five Anuvrats and

seven 'Shikshavrats' is the basic foundation of the Jain religion for householders. The five Anuvrats of Jain religion are : Never resort to any kind of unnecessary violence in family life, never speak a lie or never steal, to have only one wife and control over desires. The seven Shikshavrats too tell us as to what are good deeds and what should not be done.

From Rajgriha, Mahavira went to Vaishali. His relatives were overjoyed on seeing him. When he visited the Kshatriyas neighbourhood, he gave Diksha (initiated) to Jamali, his son-in-law. Jamali's wife Priyadarshana was the daughter of Mahavira. She received initiation and lived under the supervision of Chandana. With her, thousand more women accepted the initiation. Later on, Lord Mahavira made Jamali the teacher of five hundred Jain monks.

From Rajgriha, Mahavira went to Koshambi and accepted Jayanti, the sister of king Udayan, into his Union after her initiation. From there he went to Kaushal where he made two disciples named Sumanobhadra and Supratishttha. Later on, they became well-known Jain saints.

After reaching Shravasti from Champa, Lord Mahavira met Gosal for the last time. Gosal lived there with a widow potter. Both the religious leaders had a small quarrel. It is said that Gosal with the power of meditation burnt Mahavira's ardent followers and cursed him that he would die within six months. Mahavira reversed the curse and Gosal died within six months. Such fights amongst the various sects of monks were very common in those days. After this incident, Mahavira lived for another sixteen years.

By this time, many more of his close disciples had died. Even his body had become weak due to hard penance and illness. Mahavira was spending his last four months in Pawapuri after leaving Rajgriha. After seeing his own state, he had realised that he won't survive. He continued the task of giving sermons till his last night. During those days he gave in all one hundred forty six sermons - fifty five on sins, fifty five on virtues and thirty six on unquestioned aspects. On the night of Diwali after six days of fasting, the Lord ended his life.

After Mahavira's 'Nirvana', a collection of his sermons was brought out. It was compiled in twelve Sutras. Before Mahavira there were four rules-Yams of Jain Dharma : Ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (truth), Asteya (not to steal) and Aparigriha (not to accumulate). Mahavira added one more rule of Brahmacharya. He started a new rule of 'Pratikraman'. It means whether a monk has any weakness or not, he should regularly practice 'Pratikraman' i.e. accept his weakness and take part in a repenting process.

The kings of Nand dynasty and Chandragupta Maurya spread Jainism far and wide. During the reign of Chandragupta Maurya, Jainism had spread over almost all of India. However, King Ashoka, the grandson of Chandragupta Maurya accepted Buddhism and Buddhism became more powerful than Jainism. Later on Ashoka's grandson spread Jainism in Gujarat and Kathiawar. In the south, the initial Chalukya and Pallava kings also promoted Jainism.

After 600 years of Mahavira, Jainism was split into two sects—Shwetambar and Digambar. The Shewetambar Jains wear white clothes while the Digambars do not wear clothes. These two sects of Jainism still exist.

Girnar in Saurashtra, Parasnath and Rajgriha in Bihar, Shri Mahavirji and Dilwara temple in Rajasthan and Gomateshwar Bahubali in Mysore are the main places of Jain pilgrimages.

BUDDHA

—Yugjeet Nawalpuri

Two thousand five hundred years ago, there was a town called Kapilvastu on the foothills of Nepal. The people who lived there were Shakyas. Their priest was of Gautama dynasty.

Kapilvastu was not a very big state and it was under the rule of Kaushal. Paddy was widely cultivated and the quality of rice was very good. This is probably the reason why their leader was called Shudhodhan which means pure rice. Due to the same reason, other brothers of Shudhodhan were named on various synonyms of rice (dhan) for example Balodhan.

The same Shudhodhan was the father of Buddha. His mother's name was Mayadevi. There is a story about the birth of Buddha. Mayadevi had dreamt of a white elephant descending from the sky holding a lotus and entering her womb. As the time of delivery approached, Mayadevi started for her maternal place Devdah, which was not very far. Mayadevi departed on a palanquin. There was a forest called Lumbini en route. Mayadevi got down from the palanquin to enjoy the beauty of the forest. To control the labour pains, she stood there holding a branch of a tree. It was full moon night of the month of Vaishakha and it was here that Buddha was born.

Emperor Ashoka got a relic constructed at the place where Buddha was born in Lumbini and this place can be seen even today. It is twelve miles north of Nautanva station of North-East Railway and is called Rummindei.

The wish of the parents was fulfilled by the birth of a boy, the child was named Siddharth. A priest named Asit came to see Siddharth. After seeing him, he first laughed and then started crying. On being asked about the reason for this, he said that he laughed because a sage was born. He cried because he himself would die before seeing him become a sage. But this anecdote seems to have been added later on.

After seven days of giving birth, Mayadevi died and Siddharth was brought up by his mother's sister and step mother Prajapati Gautami.

There is not much known about the childhood of Siddharth. He was very intelligent, he had learnt lots of skills in a very short time and that he used to think a lot and remained away from sports and games.

Devdutt was his cousin. One day he shot down a swan by his arrow. Siddharth saved the swan by giving it medical aid and both started fighting for the swan. Devdutt claimed that it was his swan as he had brought it down.

Siddharth said, "The swan was dying. I saved it, so it is mine." Finally Siddharth got the swan. Siddharth looked after the swan and when it recovered, he let it fly away.

Siddharth was brought up in royal grandeur. He had all means of pleasure at his disposal. There were three palaces for three seasons. A palace each for summer, winter and rainy season. However, Siddharth was wearisome. Seeing this condition of his son, Shudhodhan got him married. It is said that Shudhodhan organised a gathering in which thousands of Shakya girls assembled and Siddharth selected his wife.

What was the name of that woman? In the books written in 'Pali', she is always referred to by the name of her son 'Rahul's mother'. However, she is also referred to as Gopa, Yashodhara, Utpalvarna, Bhadra, Bimba etc.

Siddharth was sixteen years old at the time of his marriage. All around, there were celebrations. However, there was no happiness in the mind of Siddharth. He was contemplative by nature. One or the other uneasiness prevailed in his mind. Once seeing an old man, he thought he would also grow old. On seeing a patient he realized that the body is a home of diseases. Even he could not remain away from diseases, he thought. On seeing a dead body, he understood that life is not forever. Contemplating all this, gradually all the pride in his youth vanished.

On seeing a happy and bright face of a saint, he also ardently desired of leaving his home and family. In those days it was countered that, this was the only path for salvation from the sorrows of disease, old age and death.

Thirteen years after marriage his son was born. Siddharth thought, "Here, Rahul (bondage) is born. If not now, it will be very difficult to become a monk later."

Shudhodhan happily named his grandson 'Rahul'. Siddharth used to enjoy the worldly pleasures, but he was always apprehensive about this pleasure which was not permanent. Hence, he always looked for happiness which would remain forever. His mind was never at peace. He never hid his thoughts from others. He used to discuss renunciation with his parents and his wife. It is said that his father created several obstacles but his wife always encouraged him. Planning was going on for long but Rahul's birth made Siddharth realise that it was wrong to delay.

At night Rahul and Rahul's mother were sleeping, Siddharth thought of waking her up and meeting her before leaving.

But his mind stopped him. Rahul's face was covered by his mother's hand. Once he thought of seeing Rahul by removing her hand. But then if she woke up, she would start crying. His wish of seeing his son's face remained unfulfilled. Quietly, he took his favourite horse 'Kanthak' and horsekeeper Channa with him and left for Vaishali.

After reaching Anupriya village, he sent Channa back. He took off his clothes and ornaments and cut his hair with a sword and donned the garb of a sanyasi (ascetic). He spent some time in solitude and once his mind calmed down he started for Vaishali.

Vaishali was a famous town those days. It was the capital of Lichhaavi Gana (community). All the members of the Gana ruled in cooperation. Gana was happy and prosperous. There used to be many intellectual discourses. Jain saints and other intellectuals were in great numbers. Disciples came from far and wide. Siddharth too went there in search of knowledge. He learnt the techniques of meditation from a Brahmin called Alar Kalam. However, his mind was still not at peace. He also went to Shravasti and Rajgriha.

He met several teachers. They all loved him immensely. Whatever knowledge they had, he learnt that and proceeded ahead.

In the beginning he could not eat the food he got as alms. But slowly he reconciled his mind. The ruler of Magadh, King Bimbisara offered him property and land and requested him to stay there. But Siddharth refused. However, he promised that he would spend some days there after becoming Buddha.

From there, he went to a hillock near Gaya to meditate. But that place was inhospitable and he could not concentrate on meditation. From there he went to Urubela, a village on the banks of river Neranjara (Nijlan). There were several other ascetics there. Five ascetics used to help Siddharth in his sadhana (spiritual endeavour).

In those days, people meditated for attaining knowledge. He also did that. He meditated by remaining hungry but did not succeed. However, he did not give up. He controlled his breath, starved himself and meditated, but he became emaciated. One day he even fainted. He heard village dancers singing a song which meant that the chords of the Veena if too loose would not play and if pulled too much it would break. He realized that too much penance is neither right and nor is it proper to have too much enjoyment. A middle path is the right path. The body should not be subjected to too much hardship nor it should be allowed to rest too much.

During the days of his sadhana, a milkmaid named Sujata used to give him 'kheer', a sweetened preparation made with rice and milk boiled together. She used to do so thinking it as her offering to God, but it did a lot of good for Siddharth. This is the reason why Buddhists have regards for Sujata.

He started to eat and drink. Fellow saints left him seeing that he has left penance. On regaining some strength, Siddharth again started going out for alms. From Urubela he took shelter in another forest nearby.

After regaining health he was able to meditate properly. On reaching the fourth state of meditation he would remain immersed in it for several days. It is very difficult to describe his thoughts

of those days. One day after spending a whole day and night in such a state, the next morning, he felt as if he had untied the knot and he had seen for himself the basic knowledge of the world. Six years of sadhana was successful and Siddharth became 'Buddha' (The Enlightened). The place where he attained enlightenment, is famous today as Bodhgaya.

After attaining 'Enlightenment' he stayed there for some days. He kept on changing places and crystallised thoughts of his own religion, philosophy, sanghval (sect) and rules of his Sangha.

Now, he started meeting people also. After seven weeks, two traders named Tapassu and Bhallik of Utkal were going with their merchandise. They had five hundred carts. One of them got stuck. Buddha helped in taking it out. They offered food to Buddha and listened to his sermons. These traders were his first disciples.

There was a confusion in Buddha's mind. Whether he should keep his knowledge within himself or explain it to others? But who would understand? People would only laugh. But even this confusion slowly vanished. He thought that one-third of the people of this world can make use of this knowledge and without its propagation, they will remain ignorant.

The next question that came to his mind was that who should be preached first. He remembered his teachers but by now they were dead. He reached Rishipattan Mrigdav (Sarnath) near Kashi.

After reaching Rishipattan, he met those five disciples who had left him thinking that he had given up sadhana. Buddha gave his first sermon to these five. This is known as "Dhamma Chakka Pavattan" i.e. rotating the wheel of Dharma. Buddha preached that life has two paths-one of too much of luxury, the other of strict penance. There is a third path also which is between the paths of luxury and strict penance. It has been seen by 'Tathagat', hence one should listen to it and follow it. This path of Buddha came to be known as the middle path. It has eight principles: to see right, to resolve right, to speak right, to work right, to have right means of livelihood, to make efforts properly, to have a right memory and

to meditate properly. One attains salvation by treading on these eight principles. After attaining salvation, a person neither takes birth nor dies.

Slowly, the number of his disciples increased. Buddha formed a Sangha (sect) of his disciples. These mendicants were the first five members of the Sangha. Gradually, the Sangha became bigger and his disciples spread in all directions and gave sermons.

From Rishipattan, Buddha reached Urubela. There one thousand monks and their three leaders became followers of his Sangha.

From Urubela, he went to Rajgriha. King Bimbisara fed his Sangha with his own hands and donated Venuvan-the forest. Here, two intelligent brahmins named Sariputta and Moglan became his disciples. This led to an increase in the reputation of the Sangha. The rules of the Sangha were based on the regulations of the Shakya and Lichhaavi Republics. The objective of the Sangha was welfare of the world and freedom of the people from sorrows. The monks of the Sangha led a simple life, lived on alms and did not keep any money.

The second destination of the Sangha was Kapilvastu. Buddha preached Shuddhodhan and other queens. His wife kept Rahul in front of him and asked for inheritance. Buddha made him a monk. What else did he have apart from *Sanyas* that he could give as a gift of heritance? Shuddhodhan became very sad. Looking at his sorrow, Buddha formed a rule that a person could be converted into a monk only after his parents' consent.

Thus, Buddha preached in one town for years. So many rich men and kings bowed before him but he would routinely beg for alms every morning. All his time was spent in welfare of the world. He would humbly stand in front of any door and accept the alms. Once his bowl was full, he would come back and eat it, preach other monks about work and meditation, would enquire about meals of others, meditate during the noon, meditate again after preaching to others and then go off to sleep. It was his love for mankind that encouraged him to tread on the hard path of sermons. Otherwise, what was the need for him to wander from one place to another. He could have become the head of a sect by having

a handful of disciples and accept their worship. Otherwise he could have returned to Kapilvastu and become a 'Rajarshi'.

But the sorrows of the world pained him. The society was moving towards degeneration hypocrisy was creeping in. Religion had converted into blind faith and customs. Casteism was dividing the country and human beings into sections. All the wisdom treatises were written in Sanskrit which was the language of the scholars. But the common people could not understand this language.

Buddha courageously attacked from all sides the age old conventions. His sermons were in people's dialect 'Pali' which everyone could understand whether he was a learned person or an illiterate. Later on, several ills crept amongst his disciples and Buddhism lost its roots in India. However, he showed a new path to the society.

Buddha preached that a man becomes indolent by just sitting idle and depending on God. He said that you can either make or mar yourself. He motivated the country and challenged the people to be self reliant.

Buddha gave importance to intelligence. He appealed to the people to believe in the truth and rely on logic. He even asked them to accept his sermons and preachings if they understood them.

Buddha opened the doors of knowledge for everyone. Men and women, young and old, all learnt from his discourses. He freed the people from dogmas. He inculcated respect for others and made it a nature of the Indians. Buddhism is like a power of peace in the world because it is based on the principle of coexistence.

During his old age, Buddha remained indifferent to the working of the Sangha. Differences had crept up and many selfish people had entered the Sangha. Many of his favourite disciples had died. Buddha understood that his end was near, so he distanced himself from the Sangha.

Buddha's eighty year old body could not accept the dry food of his disciple - an ironsmith called Chund. Buddha suffered from dysentery. He selected a place between two Sal trees in the forest of Kusinara (Kasya, District Dewaria) and laid down there in the

final Samadhi (intense meditation).

Seeing that his end had come, his disciples started crying. Then Buddha called his favourite disciple Anand and preached, "Anand do not cry and do not be dejected. Whoever has taken birth will die. Do not think that you will not have any teacher if I die. My sermons will be your teacher and guide you all."

Sometime after Buddha's death, Buddhism was divided into two branches—Hinayana and Mahayana. We get most of the information about Buddhism from 'Tripitak' written in Pali.

One third of the world follows Buddhism. Several experts feel that today, even after two thousand five hundred years, several teachings of Buddha are relevant for solving the problems being faced by the society.

Buddha neither built temples nor memorials. He neither conquered nor established any empire. He tried to win over the hearts of the people. This is why, the light of his wisdom is illuminating the world even today.

PANINI

—Yugjeet Nawalpuri

TILL date, there have been so many languages, which flourished and then changed. And so many vanished. So many languages which even though vanished, resurfaced and several others do not exist in any form. At present also, thousands of languages are spoken all over the world. Out of these, there is one language which is thousands of years old and will probably never vanish. That language is Sanskrit and the person who found the way to make this language immortal is Panini. It was Panini who wrote the universally acceptable grammar of Sanskrit.

Three thousand years ago, the area north-west of Jhelum and Chenab was called Gandhar. The same area today belongs to the Yusufjai Pathans. A community called Daksha inhabited that area. Dakshas had their own Union state. In this state of Dakshas, the Kabul river met the Sindhu river from the west. About four miles from the confluence of the two rivers is a village called Lahur. It is said that the same Lahur village is the birthplace of Panini. In those days it was called Shalatur. Even after twelve hundred years of Panini, this village flourished as Shalatur because the Chinese traveller Yuan Chwang had visited Shalatur and had written that the Brahmins of Shalatur were experts of grammar.

Shalatur was Panini's maternal grandfather Vishnusharman Panin's place. He was originally a resident of Valhik. Panini got his name from his lineage. Ahik Panini, the son of Vishnusharman's son Samin Panini became so famous that people forgot his first name. The same Ahik became famous as the intelligent Panini. He was born about 500 years before Christ.

Panini was known by several other names. One of his names was Shalaturiya based on the name of his village. It was because Saman Panini stayed in Shalatur, the place of his in-laws and taught

there. He was also called Rishi as he had written several verses. The origin of Ahik and Pingal was from the village Shalatur.

The name of Panini's teacher was Varsh. He was a well-known learned scholar. Panini started studying under Varsh since his childhood.

During those days students, after completion of their studies, used to tour the country. This type of tour was called 'charika'. Through charika, they got information about the people of the country, their living style and customs, tried to practise the knowledge acquired from their teachers and learnt art forms of various types. Charika used to give them an opportunity for new explorations.

Panini also went on 'charika' after the completion of his studies. His fellow students, Vyadi and Vararuchi were with him. Later on all the three did researches and became literary figures. During the charika, Panini reached the Himalayas. There he met a learned scholar called Ishwardeva.

Panini revealed his plan to Ishwardeva. The plan was to improve upon the language of texts of literature and conversation. Panini had planned that he would streamline the indefinite use of language; to correct the erroneous, to tighten the rules and to either change or improve upon the wrong rules. He also thought of making new rules for the language.

Ishwardeva appreciated Panini's plan and said, "Your plan is marvellous, and I will help you in your project."

He took out fourteen sounds from his musical instrument *damru*.

Before meeting Ishwardeva, Panini had completed the charika of the entire country. He had seen every nook and corner of the country right from the mouth of Sindhu to Assam and from the Himalayas to the Godavari. He stayed in every Janpada (rural region) or union for several days and studied in detail the religious, social, economic, political, industrial and cultural institutions. He kept in his mind whatever new thing, new style, new behaviour, new word or a new meaning of the old word or a new word with old meaning. Thus, he explained at length the meaning of words of every Janpada, about their common prevalent meaning and the correct meaning of these words.

This work demanded patience, indepth study, intelligence and observation that even the big ones would be at their wits end. Panini must have experienced several interesting incidents while collecting all these details.

When his tour ended and when he had enough material for correct usage of words he went to an isolated place in the Himalayas and started penances. This penance was nothing but working incessantly, without caring for one's own joy or sorrow, for systematic selection of the words and their distribution into different groups. To format the language in a rule and to determine the correct/wrong usage of the words according to the rule was a strenuous job.

Word is not a lifeless thing which can be kept in heaps like small or big potatoes and then say that the work has been completed. Each word has its own long story, every word has its own multi-faceted personality and several meanings. Hence, each word has its right to have its several forms, several meanings and to be divided into several sections. The work of classifying words into several groups is so difficult that no scholar can even attempt to do it on his own.

But Panini took up this work and completed it on his own.

The book that was originally prepared was called "Ganpaath". Ganpaath was the original gift of Panini. Before this, there was not even a mention of this subject in the world.

The objective of Ganpaath was to knit all the similar words into one section. This enabled all the scattered word material to come under a simple system of language.

The completion of Ganpaath was a big achievement. However, this was just a beginning. The treatise for which Panini had taken all the trouble for, was yet to begin. Diligently using all powers of his mind, intelligence and body, he created a treatise of grammar.

This treatise has eight chapters and hence it came to be known as 'Ashtadhyayi'. By altering the forms of words or by joining the words, their meanings vary or change. The power to compress or

expand the meaning of words lies within them. This power is called 'Vritti': Panini created the principles of Taddhit and Kridant (participate). This means that by suffixing 'Vaan', 'Vati', 'Kaar' to the words, new words can be made. This technique can be considered an important discovery of the treatise. He laid the foundation of modern linguistics. It is due to this importance of Vritti that Panini's treatise is called 'Vrittisutra' and Panini is called 'Vritagya Acharya'.

Panini descended from the Himalayas after completing his treatise. He reached Patliputra which was ruled by King Nand. His court included learned scholars of all subjects and logicians. Every year, chosen experts of several subjects of the country were invited. This multitude used to be called the 'Sabha' (assembly). The scholars demonstrated their discovery before this court and debated on the new researches. The scholar who could give satisfactory replies to all the queries and prove his discontent was considered as the true author of that treatise. This process of passing such an academic exercise was called 'Sannayan'. It was considered to be a big honour. After the 'Sannayan', that scholar was aptly awarded and all his taxes were waived off.

Panini's teacher, Acharya Varsh, and his brother Upavarsh had also passed the 'Sannayan'. These were the ones who had authored the treatise of words. Panni's real brother Pingal and fellow students Vyadi and Vararuchi had also received this honour.

However, the court discriminated between the 'Sannayan' of Panini and the others. It accepted the importance of Panini's treatise and fixed an award of one thousand gold coins each for those who could understand Panini's treatise properly. The prize-winners were later known as 'Haari'. They were given an elephant along with the thousand coins.

Truly, there has been no other lexicographer who can match Panini's expertise. No other grammar of the world has reached the vastness, orderliness and versatile imagination like the Ashtadhyayi. Many books have been written on the basis of Ashtadhyayi or about Ashtadhyayi.

Ashtadhyayi of Panini came to use during the hard times of

Sanskrit language. The age of vedic language had ended. New subjects, new literature and new words were emerging. Sanskrit had expanded from Godavari to the north of India. All attempts to format this scattered language were in vain. When Ashtadhyayi was born, it gained popularity and Panini came to be known as "God Panini".

Panini lived from 480-410 BC. About Panini's death, Panchatantra mentions that a lion had killed him.

PURU

—Satya Sukhrayan

ALEXANDER was the great warrior of Greece. Starting from Greece, he moved ahead and reached India by defeating the armies of many countries on the way. Alexander's name reminded us of another brave Indian warrior, King Puru, whom the Greek addressed as Porus.

He fought keeping at stake his life but due to lack of unity amongst Indians, he could not save his land from being attacked by the enemies. However, his name will be immortal in India because of his courage and bravery in that era.

From 6th century BC to the reign of Chandragupta Maurya, the West-North Frontier, Punjab, Sindh and its adjoining area was divided into small states. Some were ruled by kings and some were republics or had the Panchayati Raj system. They used to quarrel amongst themselves. All around there was a reign of deceit, fraud, selfish manoeuvres, enmity and hostility.

This was the reason why some selfish kings welcomed Alexander when he reached the Indian border during his victory campaign. At the top of the list of these kings was Aambhi, the king of Takshshila. The friendship of Puru and the king of Abhisaar was disliked by king Aambhi. It is said that Alexander gave forty eight lakhs of rupees to the greedy Takshshila king and made him his ally. In return he gave five thousand soldiers to Alexander. One of the objectives of this agreement was to insult Puru.

Alexander attacked India. Most of the kings did not want Alexander to enter India. They fought with him. But how? Individually and not united. How could these small kings match the super conquerer Alexander's experienced army? They were finally defeated. If that was not enough, Aambhi of Takshashila, Sanjay of Pushkalawati, Kofayas of Kabul, Ashwajit and Shashigupta

not only welcomed Alexander, but also rejoiced in his victory over the other neighbouring kings.

Puru was a brave king. He could not tolerate that a foreign invader should destroy the dignity of his state. He knew that all his neighbouring states were against him, including his friend, the king of Abhisar. It is said when Alexander was in Takshshila, the king of Abhisar sent him gifts clandestinely. However, Puru was not discouraged by finding himself all alone and he was determined to confront Alexander. Alexander was advancing like a storm. Independent communities residing between Kapisha and Takshshila gave a tough fight to Alexander. However, they were defeated at the end. When Alexander reached the banks of Sindhu river, Aambhi sent 700 horseriders for his help and sent a message of surrendering Takshshila. Alexander reached Takshshila after crossing the river Sindhu (Indus).

Aambhi gave a grand welcome to Alexander and his army in Takshshila. Aambhi just wanted to insult Puru once. Alexander prepared his plan to invade the eastern states during his stay in Takshshila. Aambhi provided him all the help.

Alexander then sent a message to King Puru to accept his supremacy. But Puru was not only brave but self-respecting too. In reply, he sent a message that he would meet him at the battle field.

Alexander got furious on getting the reply. Aambhi's provocation added fuel to his anger. Alexander proceeded with his army and 5000 soldiers of Aambhi and reached the western coast of river Jhelum. Here, Puru's army also reached the eastern coast. The river was overflowing and to cross the river Jhelum was not easy. Puru's huge army on the other side consisted of 30,000 infantry soldiers, 4000 horseriders, 300 chariots and 200 elephants. Alexander's army was demoralised by this huge army.

The truth was that not only was it dangerous to cross the river, but they were scared that Puru's army would easily defeat them. Both the armies stayed for weeks on the river banks. One night, when it was raining heavily and Puru's army was unarmed

and relaxing, Alexander crossed the river Jhelum about 17 miles ahead alongwith 1100 soldier. There was a hillock between the two armies, hence Puru could not get any information on Alexander's army crossing the river. After some time when Puru came to know that Alexander's army was crossing the river, he immediately sent his son with 2000 horseriders and 120 chariots and ordered them to stop Alexander's army from moving ahead. But by that time, the entire army of Alexander had crossed the river.

Puru's son was killed in the encounter at the battleground. 400 soldiers of Puru were also killed. When Puru got this news, he proceeded to confront Alexander with his entire army. Puru had a lot of confidence in his elephants. So he positioned the elephants in the front and infantry in the back. These soldiers were armed with heavy bows which were so huge that their one end touched the ground and long arrows could be shot by pulling the string strongly. Horseriders were positioned on both sides of these soldiers and chariots were positioned in their front.

From the other side, Alexander's was also advancing. He stopped on seeing the tactical arrangement of Puru's army. His army on foot was behind. After resting for a while, Alexander himself started to plan for the attack. Alexander first wanted to make Puru's elephants useless. Hence, he himself planned to attack one of Puru's unit to the left and take the help of horseriders to attack Puru's army from behind.

When Alexander attacked as per his strategy, Puru's horseriders were crushed from both sides. Commotion resulted in the entire army on one hand and on the other hand, Alexander's attack intensified. Indian army gathered near the elephants to save themselves. Now, the elephants started to trample the Greek army but the Greeks started shooting arrows on the elephants. As a result, the elephants turned around and began to trample their own soldiers. The ground was moist due to rains and the Indian archers could not position their bows on the ground accurately and their shooting slowed down. The chariot army was also rendered helpless as the wheels of the chariots were stuck in the mud. Even then, Puru stood firm bravely. Suddenly he saw Aambhi coming from

the front. Puru got furious on seeing him. He attacked him but Aambhi escaped his attack and ran away.

By this time, the entire army of Puru was scattered all around, but Puru was relentlessly fighting. Alexander was amazed to see his bravery and war skills. He sent a message for Puru's surrender. But Puru was self-respecting person. He paid no heed to it and kept on fighting. Finally, Alexander sent one of the friends of Puru to him. By this time Puru was totally exhausted. He got down from the elephant, took one sip of water and went to Alexander. Alexander was greatly impressed by the grand personality of Puru. Puru was walking straight towards him. Alexander asked him generously, "Puru, How should I treat you?"

Puru replied with his head held high—"The way in which one king would treat the other king."

Alexander was overwhelmed by this reply. Alexander himself was brave. He understood the real value of bravery. He handed him back his kingdom and became his friend.

This is a story of a brave warrior who even risked his life to check the storm of foreign invasion. After fighting with Puru's army, Alexander's army realised that it was not easy to fight with the Indian army.

After Puru, the valiant communities or republics of Punjab encountered Alexander at every nook and corner. These communities were democratic. They had no king. Their Panchayats managed everything. Out of these, Kath, Kshudrak, Malav and Yandhey etc were pre-eminent. Alexander was hurt with a spear while fighting with them.

Alexander conquered the land between Greece and upto Indian border in a few months. It took 19 months for him in the frontier territory. Consequently, the soldiers of Alexander refused to move forward after reaching the Beas river and he had to abandon the idea of victory over India and return back.

CHANAKYA

—R.N. Tiwari

ABOUT four hundred years before Christ, a great man named Chanakya was born. With his shrewd planning, he had the Greek rulers thrown out of India. He also laid the foundation of a large Indian kingdom by uniting the small states. Chanakya understood the deep secrets of politics and there was no one who could match his diplomatic skills. It was a result of intelligence of Chanakya that Chandragupta Maurya could sit on the royal throne after defeating the cruel king Nand. Not only this, it was due to Chanakya that he could establish a vast Maurya empire by destroying all his enemies.

There is another reason for Chandragupta's fame. It is his book "Arthashastra", through which the economic and social condition of that time of India can be known. Apart from this, the principles relating to administration laid down by him are still considered unique. By reading Arthashastra, we come to know how scholarly, wise and far sighted its author was. The proof of Chanakya's deep and penetrative insight a visible in Arthashastra, has placed him on a very high pedestal amongst the world's best politicians and diplomats.

There are several anecdotes prevalent which are based on the initial life of Chanakya. Once Chanakya's mother started crying on seeing the face of her son. Chanakya was surprised to see his mother crying. He asked, "Mother! why do you cry?"

Chanakya's mother said, "Son! you are destined to become a great king in your life. You will forget your mother after becoming a king. I have tears in my eyes because of this."

Chanakya was all the more surprised. He said, "But how do you know that I am going to become a king."

Mother said, "Your two front teeth tell me that you will become a king."

Now Chanakya understood the reason of his mother's sorrow. He went out, picked up a brick and uprooted both the teeth and threw them away. Then, he came inside and told his mother—"Mother, I have broken my teeth, now when I don't have the teeth with kingly features, how will I become a king. You be assured. I will neither become a king, nor will leave you. The biggest thing in the world is insignificant before your affection."

The above incident tells us how soft hearted Chanakya was. But this also shows the other aspect of Chanakya. Neither could he tolerate his insult, nor could he remain silent on any crisis over his nation. Firm resolve and marvellous wisdom were the biggest qualities of Chanakya.

There is another incident which tells us about this firm resolve. One day, Chanakya was going somewhere. On the way there was a thorny bush of Kusha (sacrificial) grass. As he was walking, one kusha pierced through his foot causing a painful wound which annoyed Chanakya. There itself he took an oath — "I will not sit in peace until I uproot all the plants of Kusha." That was it, he sat there and started to uproot each and every Kusha plant and poured buttermilk in its root, so that the plant may not grow again.

The above may not be true, but it is true that Chanakya's anger was terrible. It is also correct that when he decided to do anything he would not rest without completing it.

Chanakya was a learned Brahmin of Takshashila which was the centre for all types of education in those times. Pataliputra, the capital of Magadh, was also a famous centre of learning like Takshashila during those times. After completing his studies in Takshashila he came to Patliputra for further studies.

During that time, Dhananand or Nand was the king of Magadh. Nand was very greedy and he had accumulated abundant wealth by imposing heavy taxes on the people. But, the behaviour of Dhananand had changed a lot by the time Chanakya reached Magadh. He started splurging money on donations and charity. He opened a donation centre to distribute alms and formed a committee

headed by a Brahmin to manage this centre. A rule had been formulated that the head of this committee could donate upto one crore coins to anyone.

Since Chanakya was learned, his wisdom and qualifications made him famous in Pataliputra and he was appointed the head of the managing committee of the donation centre.

Though Chanakya was learned and possessed unique talent, he was very ugly and dark complexioned. As luck would have it, one day Dhananand called him to the court. He had never seen him before. The king got angry on seeing him and ordered to throw him out of the court.

How could Chanakya tolerate this insult? He too was very angry. Trembling with anger, he untied his braid and addressing the king he said, "You mean person, you have insulted me in the court in front of everyone, I will take revenge. I will destroy you and your dynasty and will make an able person sit on the throne of Magadh. I will not tie my braid until I accomplish this task."

He thus left the court with anger. While leaving Pataliputra, he unexpectedly met Chandragupta. The same Chandragupta who became famous later in history as Chandragupta Maurya.

By staying with Chandragupta for some time, he realised that he was very talented and brave. Hence he took him to Takshshila. It was here that he trained Chandragupta for 7-8 years in war skills and treatises and made him an expert in all forms of knowledge. Later on Chanakya managed to end the Nand dynasty through Chandragupta.

The time when Chandragupta was learning about weapons and treatises, almost at the same time, Alexander had attacked India. The time was 327 years before Christ. Alexander had won over the entire Greece and his army was advancing towards India by trampling the vast kingdom of Iran. Alexander was dreaming of conquering the entire world.

During the attack of Alexander there were several small states in the Sindhu (Indus) river valley in the western part and in Punjab. These small states could not survive the strong and organised army of Greece.

Some kings fought bravely with Alexander. King Puru's name is on the top of the list of such kings. Puru was defeated in the war. However, Alexander and his Greek army realised it was tough to fight with the Indians. He could not gather courage to advance further across the Vyas river and he returned back by appointing his own governor of the areas which he had won.

Chanakya and Chandragupta both saw how internal differences enabled the Greek to control over the Western part of India. After Alexander left Chanakya resolved to free the country from the rule of Greeks. Chanakya viewed foreign rule as the biggest evil. Hence, keeping Chandragupta ahead, he mobilised a small army in Punjab and made Chandragupta, the leader of this army. To strengthen Chandragupta's hands, he united some kings of hill states of Punjab and other groups to support him.

It was the result of confluence of Chanakya's intelligence, war skills of Chandragupta and the bravery of democratic states of Punjab, that within three years of Alexander's invasion, India was free from the rule of the Greeks and there was no trace of foreign invasion at all. Now Chanakya diverted his attention towards Magadh. He remembered his row. He started making a plan for Chandragupta to sit on the throne by destroying the dynasty of Nand.

The story of how Chanakya, with his shrewd thinking, plotted against king Nand and how this conspiracy was successful, is a long one. The same story has been mentioned in detail in the Sanskrit play 'Mudrarakshasam' written by Vishakhadutta. By using all diplomatic strategies, Chanakya fulfilled his vow to destroy the Nand lineage. He not only made Chandragupta sit on the throne of Magadh, but also helped Chandragupta in expanding the kingdom of Magadh.

Chanakya was a sacrificing person. He never accepted to live in palaces. Despite being the Prime Minister of powerful Emperor like Chandragupta, he lived in a hut, ate simple food and wear simple clothes. His order prevailed in the entire kingdom and even Chandragupta stood before him with his head bent down.

During Chanakya's period, there were two types of systems of rule—the rule of the king—Rajtantra and the rule of the people — Ganatantra. Unlike the democracies of today where all the administration of government affairs is done through the selected representatives there was a different system. Those were the Panchayati states of generally the people of one caste. According to Chanakya, in comparison to rules of smaller communities, king's rule was better. This is the reason why he allowed to accept the supremacy of one king by abolishing small democratic states.

According to them, the ideal king is one who worries about the welfare of its people. The king who does not care for his own pleasure and is devoted to his subjects is the righteous king. Chanakya has laid great stress on this in his 'Arthashastra'. He said that king's happiness lies in the happiness of his people and the people's interests are his interests. He also wrote that the instructions given in Vedas, treatises of religion, etc. are insignificant before the decree of the king. Chanakya has written in detail about the state's duty, council of ministers, management of state, management of finance of the state, justice, foreign policy etc. It is not important to discuss them here. Here, it is sufficient to repeat what has been written earlier that the king's interests lie in the interests of his people and if the people are happy the king would be happy. Chanakya had spread a net of spies to know the condition of the people of vast Mauryan empire and whether the employees of the king harassed the people. These spies could approach the king anytime and give news about the entire state, enabling him to keep a watch on his employees. As per the opinion of Chanakya, the customs of divorce and widow marriage were right according to religion. He supported them.

There is a residential colony-Chanakyapuri in New Delhi which is named after Chanakya, the great man of India. Foreign diplomats stay in Chanakyapuri. What can be a more apt name for a place where diplomats from all the world live? Chanakyapuri, named after the titan of diplomacy, is a tribute to this great personality.

CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA

—R.N. Tiwari

INDIA was divided into small states during the time of Mahavira and Buddha. They used to quarrel amongst themselves. For a long time, there was no powerful king who could establish a big kingdom by uniting the smaller states. The king who accomplished this task, was Chandragupta Maurya.

Chandragupta Maurya came to be known as the first historical Emperor since he established such a huge empire in India for the first time. A systematic history of India is easily available from this period onwards.

The story of Chandragupta Maurya is the story of that era when the north and to a large extent the south of India, for the first time came under one powerful kingdom. The story of Chandragupta Maurya is the story of political, economic and cultural unity of the country.

Chandragupta was a kshatriya of Moriya lineage. The Moriya kshatriyas belonged to a branch of kshatriyas of Shakyas lineage in which Lord Buddha was born. Chandragupta's father was the head of the Moriya kshatriyas. It is said that when Chandragupta was in his mother's womb, his father was killed in a war. There was no one left to support them.

Seeing no way out, Chandragupta's uncle brought his sister to Magadh—the capital of Pataliputra. Chandragupta was born here. It was difficult for his mother to feed herself. The burden of the child added to that. Seeing the difficulty, Chandragupta's uncle thought of a way and told his sister to keep the child quietly at a place of some well-to-do person. Some good will definitely take care of an orphan child. This way, they will be saved from the burden of the child and the child also will not starve.

Hence, deciding so, Chandragupta's mother left her child in a

shed of cows. Luckily, the owner of those cows was a kindhearted cowherd. When he saw the child lying in the shed, he brought him home and started rearing him like his own son. When Chandragupta grew up a little, he sold him to a hunter. The hunter gave Chandragupta the responsibility of taking the cattle out for grazing.

It is said that coming events cast their shadows before. His attributes of leadership could be seen from childhood itself. He used to go out of his village for grazing cattle with the other boys. While the animals were grazing, the boys used to play the game of king and subjects. During such games, Chandragupta used to sit on a high hillock with the grandeur of a king. The other boys would be courtesans and used to sit around him. Then, two boys would come before the king for settlement of their dispute. Chandragupta would do justice after carefully and seriously listening to their complaints. The villagers were very happy on seeing their game. Who would have thought that a person posing as a king would become the illustrious Emperor of the entire Indian empire?

Had it not been for destiny, Chandragupta would have spent his entire life in the village in grazing cattle. One day when he was playing the game of king and subjects, Chanakya passed by. On seeing the children play the game, he stopped and watched. His deep insight immediately judged the hidden ability and talent of Chandragupta. When the game ended, Chanakya alongwith Chandragupta went to the hunter whose cattle he used to take for grazing. Chanakya bought Chandragupta by giving one thousand Kasharpan (currency of those times) to the hunter and brought him to Takshshila from Pataliputra. From here, Chandragupta's fate took a turnaround. In Takshshila, under his supervision, Chanakya taught him the craft of warfare and also Shastras-the treatises.

Another story is that the father of Chandragupta was the leader of the army of kings and he was brought up by the Nands after his father's death. Some say that Chandragupta was either a relative or dependant of the Nands and that he was saddened by misbehaviour of Nands and he went to Takshashila where he met Chanakya.

The meeting of Chanakya and Chandragupta was an important

event, which not only changed the lives of these two, but also changed the course of Indian history. It is necessary to throw a cursory glance on the contemporary political situation of India, in order to understand better the importance of the coming together of these two. It is inferred that famous Greek warrior Alexander attacked India, at the same time when Chandragupta was learning under the guidance of Chanakya. Western India was divided into small states at the time of Alexander's invasion.

Chandragupta and Chanakya, both were in Takshshila at the time of Alexander's invasion. They saw how a foreign invader, Alexander, taking advantage of the rifts and weaknesses of the Indian kings, tied western India with chains of slavery. The defeat at the hands of Greeks was distressing to both of them. They remained quiet while Alexander was in India, but once Alexander left, both Chanakya and Chandragupta laboured hard to free India from foreign rule and remove any trace of Greek rule from the Indian soil.

Chandragupta was a very brave and courageous youngman. He learnt the craft of warfare from Chanakya. Not only this, he also observed closely the war skills of an able commander like Alexander. He got an opportunity to study the speciality of Greek warfare and weaknesses of Indian war-skills during the Indo-Greek wars. He used the lessons learnt whenever he got an opportunity. Greek historians have written about Chandragupta's meetings with Alexander. Alexander was thoroughly impressed by him and predicted that this young man would do many great works in future.

Chanakya formulated a plan to throw out the Greeks from India and gave this responsibility to Chandragupta. For this, he required a big army.

Both of them toured and inspired the people of Punjab to rise against the foreign rule. Slowly, Chandragupta started getting soldiers for his army. The land of Punjab was full of brave youth. What they needed was an able leadership. When they got an intelligent guide like Chanakya and a commander like Chandragupta, it was as if a new life was enthused into them and the democratic castes of Punjab also joined their hands.

Chandragupta trained the new entrants of the army with warfare skills and converted them into good soldiers. After this he openly started his fight against the Greeks. The result was that within three years of Alexander's departure from India, Chandragupta freed the country from the Greeks and removed every trace of foreign rule from India.

After freeing western India from foreign rule, Chandragupta diverted his attention towards Magadh. A lot of thought and planning was required before attacking Magadh. The king of Magadh was very powerful and also had a huge army. He considered his army insufficient for winning over Magadh. But two things were in his favour. Firstly, he had the company of an able and intelligent diplomat like Chanakya. Secondly, the ruler of Magadh, Dhananand was very unpopular with the people. People were dissatisfied with him.

Chandragupta got more help from Chanakya's shrewd diplomacy, rather than from his army in his win over Magadh. Magadh's army was huge. There were two lakh infantry soldiers, twenty thousand horseriders, two thousand chariots driven by four horses each and three thousand elephants. It was not only difficult but almost impossible to win over this army in a direct fight. However, the real power behind a king is the happiness of its people. The people of his kingdom were unhappy with Nand. Chanakya with his diplomacy won over several of his officers. Chandragupta defeated the Magadh army in war and acquired the rule over Magadh. He had already won over Punjab. Now the kingdom of Magadh also came under his rule.

After winning over Magadh, Punjab and Frontier Province, Chandragupta moved towards other directions. Chandragupta did not do this because of his greed for empire. He had seen that the foreigners take advantage of the differences amongst the smaller states. This had recently happened in Punjab and border region. Had they all fought together against Alexander, they would not have lost. So now, he wanted to unite them under one rule to make a powerful and strong country.

Chandragupta raised a huge army of 6 lakh soldiers and started on his victory campaign. Whichever king tried to compete with him, was defeated badly.

But, there was one more crisis in waiting. After the death of Alexander, there was a big fight for power amongst his commanders and a conflict arose. A commander named Seleucus was the winner. Seleucus decided to win over those Indian states which were won by Alexander but now were ruled by Chandragupta. He attacked with a huge army. This time, the Greeks had to fight with united India under the able leadership of Chandragupta and without the help of a traitor like the king of Aambhi. Chandragupta defeated Seleucus badly. Seleucus signed a treaty with Chandragupta and married off his daughter to him. He also gave the states of Hirat, Kandhar, the valley of Kabul and Baluchistan to Chandragupta. In return, Chandragupta also gifted him 500 elephants. This event occurred in 305 BC.

Thus, the kingdom of Chandragupta expanded from Bengal in the East to Afghanistan in the West and Himalayas in the north upto the river Narmada. But we do not honour Chandragupta only because he won big wars and freed the country from foreign invaders. No doubt, this was a big task. His name is written with gold letters in the Indian history because of his expertise with which he managed all sections of administration. Chandragupta's kingdom was spread far and wide. It was not an easy task to manage such a big empire. Specially, during those days, when there were not many means of conveyance. However, despite all these problems, Chandragupta ruled very intelligently and efficiently.

The head of the Empire was Chandragupta himself. His decisions on army, justice etc, were used to be final. He used to take his army to the battleground himself. He himself considered the applications of people. Megasthenes has written that his subjects could see him even while he was busy getting massage in his palace. He himself appointed the senior officials of his empire. He had a Council of Ministers to run the empire. Central Government was divided into 18 Departments.

For convenience of administration, the entire empire was divided into several states. The king used to govern Magadh and nearby states. The politically and strategically important states were governed by the king's heirs or by the princes. The villages were

governed by the Gram Sabha whose members were the village elders. Gram Sabha possessed many rights. Smaller quarrels were settled by the Gram Sabha. It could punish the criminals too. Roads, bridges lakes were constructed by the Gram Sabha and means of entertainment were also provided by it. The ruler of the village was called a 'Gramik'.

Chandragupta's army consisted of six lakh infantry soldiers, thirty thousand horses, nine thousand elephants and eight thousand chariots. He had a separate department for this also. Chandragupta managed his army so well that no one dared to attack India during his reign. There was a police department also to protect the people within the state.

The punishment policy of Chandragupta was very strict. There were very few crimes and people used to live in peace.

Chandragupta laid great emphasis on the irrigation of land. A relic in Junagarh (Saurashtra) tells us that he had constructed 'Sudarshan Lake' by making a dam on a hilly river. Water from This lake was used for irrigation purposes through canals. Chandragupta always protected the interests of the people. He constructed lakes, canals, roads and put milestones depicting the distances between places. He got constructed a 1200 mile road from Peshawar to Pataliputra. He reigned very efficiently and successfully for twenty four years.

It is said that Magadh faced a severe famine during the last few years of the rule of Chandragupta. Chandragupta had become a follower of Jainism. He handed over his empire to his son Bindusar and went towards Mysore in the South with a Jain saint called Bhadrabahu. Chandragupta gave up his life thereby observing fast as per the tradition of Jainism.

But this fact is not supported by other sources, nor is there any mention about them of Chandragupta's end.

ASHOKA

—Yugjeet Nawalpuri

ASHOKA ! it is an enchanting name of the Indian history. This is because his name is in the forefront amongst those who have brought honour to the country.

Ashoka was the grandson of Chandragupta. The Maurya kings have all been powerful. But none of them was like Ashoka. His father's name was Bindusar.

Ashoka's mother was the daughter of a Brahmin. Bindusar did not love his son that much. Ashoka was also ugly. It was Bindusar's wish to hand over the throne to his elder son Suseem.

During the days when Suseem had gone towards Takshshila to suppress the revolt, Emperor Bindusar became ill. Ashoka was the Prince of Ujjain i.e. he was the Subedar. There Ashoka fell in love with Devi-the beautiful daughter of a merchant of Vidisha (modern Bhilsa). Later, Devi became Ashoka's wife and queen and mother of Mahendra and Sanghamitra.

Ashoka reached Patliputra from Ujjain on hearing about his father's illness. Patliputra existed at the place where Patna is today. It was the capital of Maurya kings.

Ashoka acquired the throne after his father's death. This took place in 272 BC. It is said that Bindusar had sixteen queens and one hundred one sons and Ashoka conquered the throne by killing ninety nine of them. But historians do not believe this. Yes, he did fight with Suseem. Due to these quarrels, for four years, Ashoka could not be crowned as the king.

It is said that Ashoka was very cruel. People used to call him 'ChandAshoka'— cruel Ashoka.

There were several other names of Ashoka. One of them was 'Ashoka Vardhan'. After his Kalinga victory, he came to be known

as "DharmAshoka". Those days every king had his own name at the time of ascending the throne. His name on coronation was perhaps "Piyadasi". His title was "Devanampiya". "Magadh" and "Shantavsaad" are two of his other names. However, at the time of ascending the throne, "ChandAshoka" was the name in vogue.

Ashoka was an autocratic king, but he did not become famous for the expansion of his kingdom, but because he changed the moral face of the world. He spread the message of friendship and compassion of Buddha in whole of Asia. His religious ambassadors even went to Egypt and Greece.

Ashoka had been ruling for eight years. The coastal area between Mahanadi and Godavari, now called Orissa, used to be called Kalinga at that time. To expand his kingdom, he invaded Kalinga. The people of Kalinga were freedom loving and brave. They were not frightened and got ready to face him. A fierce battle took place, where one lakh were dead, one and a half lakh imprisoned and lakhs became victims of hunger and diseases.

This massive destruction changed Ashoka's heart. ChandAshoka became DharmAshoka. He spent the rest of his life in service to religion. Instead of beating the battledrums, he reverberated the conchshell of the teachings of Dharma (religion). So far there used to be ministers for administration, now he appointed ministers for religion, known as 'Dharma-Mahamati'. So far he had been erecting victory pillars, now he got Dharma pillars constructed. Charity became the way of life and he started greater donations for religion. Spritual drumbeats took the place of war drumbeats. The Iranian Asoori Kings got their eulogy carved on rocks, but Ashoka got religious inscriptions prepared in abundance. He considered his religious policy better than the politics of war.

During the life time of Buddha, his religion had not crossed the Indian border. Buddha himself wanted to spread it far and wide. And this wish of his was fulfilled by Ashoka.

Buddha's religion considered human life as the pirot. Ashoka was the king and he had understood the importance of religion for his people. Religious proclamations were made in place of royal decrees.

Ashoka stopped the practice of animal sacrifice in the country. It was announced that a person disobeying this order would have to pay fifty 'Pan' as penalty. Hospitals, both for human beings and animals, were opened. Trees for shade were planted on both sides of the road and wells were dug. He sent the learned scholars abroad to spread the message of religion. He himself started the 'Dharma Yatra' (Religious Tours) and got religious discourses carved on stones.

His 'Dharma Yatras' were unique. Firstly, he went to places associated with Buddha's life. Then he toured all the important places of the country. Wherever he went, he left his orders, directions and sermons on stones and rocks. Wherever no rock was found, he got huge stone pillars erected. A network of pillars, relics, stupas and caves was spread. These memorials are witness to his love for religion and people.

He established two new towns — Srinagar in Kashmir and Devpatan in Nepal.

Ashoka's Subedar, Tushashp 'Yawan', constructed a lake by building a dam on a river in Girnar in Saurashtra. Such an example of big construction is difficult to find in ancient age.

The art of Stupas (Monuments) is Ashoka's contribution to the world. His imagination is worth appreciating. The decoration of Stupas adds to their beauty. According to the Buddhist literature, Ashoka constructed eighty four thousand such Stupas and Chaityas (Shrines). This seems to be an exaggerated number. But this number must have been in thousands. Many have already been discovered and it is possible that others would be found during excavations.

Ashoka's pillars are upto fifty feet in height. They are made of single stone pieces without a joint. The wood work has been so neatly done that it is smooth like a mirror. There are statues of elephant, bull, horse or a lion at the top. These are symbols—elephant symbolises the evolution of Buddha in this world and entering the womb of Maya; bull symbolises birth; horse is a symbol of leaving home and lion symbolises the propagation of religion. Below these statues are figures of inverted lotus stems. On the stems, different types of

animals, birds and creepers have been carved. At the middle, the pillars were cylindrical, but tapered towards the top.

Literature also flourished alongwith art during Ashoka's reign. The language of Ashoka's relics was brilliant and effective. This language is not possible without good literature. Manuscripts were written in abundance.

Ashoka held a third 'Dharma Sabha' for expansion of religion in foreign countries. Buddhist scholars were invited from all over the country. Ashoka's teacher Moggaliputta Tissa presided over the 'Dharma Sabha'. Several issues were discussed. A council of one thousand monks was formed. The meeting of the council went on for nine months. Religious texts were refined and corrected. Tissa's book 'Kathavastu' was declared authentic. The plan of sending propagators all over the world was approved. A permanent arrangement for propaganda in Kashmir, Gandhar and Lanka was made.

Ashoka sent religious ambassadors alongwith political ambassadors to foreign countries. These religious ambassadors commanded great respect in the courts of King Aantiyok of West Asia, King Turmaya of Egypt, Antekin of Makdunia, Maka of North Africa (Saireeni) and Aliksunder of Ipirus.

The communities of Kamboj, Gandhar, Nabhak, Yon (Greek), Bhoj, Pitanik, Rashtrik, Keralputra, Chol, Tamraparni (Sinhali), Satiyaputra, etc., were treading the path of compassion and friendship. In Ashoka's kingdom, religion took deep routes in the communities of Andhra, Parind and Kalinga.

From the thirteenth year of coronation, Ashoka set up a new ministry. Earlier 'Anta Mahamatra' existed for border security and 'Nagrak Mahamatra' for judicial system along with other departments. Now there was a 'Dharma Mahamatra' also for religious works.

A large number of employees of this department had spread into the villages. They started propogating Ashoka's religious messages to every household. The triumphet of victory of religion resounded all around.

There were announcements of protection of interests of the people, measures for their happiness and assistance to orphans and the infirm in these messages. The orders of less capital punishment to criminals and compassion towards all were spread. Emphasis was laid on communal harmony.

Ashoka himself used to travel all over his empire to find out the wellbeing of his people. He used to say, "People are my children." Just as people can do everything for the happiness and pleasures of their children, similarly, Ashoka was always ready for the welfare of his people. His orders were, "Wherever I am, in the court, in the dining room or in the bedroom, the people responsible for conveying the condition of his subjects could come and tell him so."

Thus, he started spending all his energy and money towards the welfare of his people. He never discriminated between his people and the people of other states for benefaction. This is the secret of so much propagation of Buddhism in foreign countries. He had even engaged his children for propagating religion and welfare works of people in foreign countries. Mahendra and Sanghamitra were sent to Lanka, Kustan China and Khotan for fulfilling these objectives.

Ashoka treated all the religions equally and helped everyone. He was a Buddhist, sometimes as a monk he used to stay in 'Viharas' and got constructed Stupas, pillars and propagated the message of Buddhism. This way, he was quietly bringing about a great revolution in the society. Despite being a loyal Buddhist, he was away from communalism. His people had all the freedom to follow any religion. He had respect for all religions and was against dogmas prevalent in any religion.

Religion for Ashoka was not one creed or sect. He propagated those things which were acceptable to all. He never asked non-Buddhists to convert into Buddhism. He never indulged in philosophical disputes. His religion was another name for good conduct.

The outcome of his generosity was very fruitful. His sermons and his own conduct brought about more cooperation amongst all sects. Buddhism spread widely and vastly all over the world because of Ashoka's magnanimity.

Ashoka's empire was spread from the Himalayas in the north to present Andhra Pradesh and Mysore in the South and from Orissa in the east to Kabul in the west. The kingdom was divided into four states. Takshashila, Ujjain, Totli (Kalinga) and Isila (South), were the four state capitals. Over and above these four capitals was Pataliputra—the central capital. The Subedar of the state was called 'Kumar'. Generally the 'Kumars' were the sons of kings. There were several parts of states and their rulers were called 'Raja'.

At the centre, there was a council of ministers to help the king. The incharge of every department was called a "Mahamatra". The officials of the district were called "Pradeshik". Subordinates were called "Yukta".

The anniversary of Ashoka's coronation was celebrated with much fanfare. Every year on this occasion several prisoners were released.

After ruling for thirty seven years, Ashoka handed over the throne to his grandson 'Dashrath', in 233 BC and went to South Suwannagiri for leading a religious life. He died within a year after reaching there.

His politics was politics of welfare of the people. He reared his subjects like his own children. His resolve was to remove the sorrows of the people. His royal duty was to propagate religion. He was ready to sacrifice his food, rest, sleep and everything for this. His conduct was an example for his subjects to follow. He had left the policy of invading other kingdoms. He had assured protection to the neighbouring kingdoms. He always convinced them that they would always get happiness from him and not sorrow. He lit the lamp of religion even amongst the tribals.

For his employees, his decree was—take care of the people with righteousness. Act righteously. Give happiness to the people righteously. Protect the people with righteousness. You are like the mother of the people. Look after them carefully.

After giving the decree, he would not remain quiet. He ensured their strict supplementation as well. There was no place for those

who violated these. In case of mistakes, he would first point them out, and if there was no improvement even after preaching, then only he would punish him.

Not only was Ashoka idealistic and emotional, he was also intelligent and simple. He was diligent and had the perseverance to accomplish great work. He sacrificed his own life for public service. Nowhere do we find a royal example of Buddha's principle of 'maximum good for maximum people'.

Ashoka was kind, compassionate but tough and a stable ruler too. There was good governance in the entire kingdom. Peace prevailed everywhere. He has expressed satisfaction on this in his articles.

By making the 'Ashok Chakra' as its National Symbol, the Indian democracy imbibed the high ideals of Ashoka. There cannot be a bigger proof of Ashoka's greatness than the fact that just like Ashoka, Independent India is marching ahead on the policy of friendship with other countries. The world community appreciates the Indian policy of peace and goodwill. Apart from this, acceptance of Chakra of a Buddhist king as its national symbol also illustrates our principle of secularism. Whenever we get a good thing, there should be capacity to take it.

VISHNUSHARMA

—R.N. Tiwari

THERE was a town called Mahilaropya in Southern India. Once upon a time Amarshakti ruled over there as a King. He had three sons named—Bahushakti, Ugrashakti and Anantshakti. All these three boys were fools, naughty and mischievous. None of them was interested in studies. King Amarshakti was sad and worried about these demerits of his sons.

Once Amarshakti expressed his worry in front of everyone in his court. Silence prevailed in the court on hearing the king speak about this. At the end, a Brahmin named Vishnusharma asked the king to send his sons with him and that he would train them in politics in six months. The king accepted the offer and the three princes were handed over to him.

Vishnusharma took the princes to his place and started narrating interesting stories which later became famous as 'Panchatantra'. His stories were very interesting. The princes enjoyed hearing them. It was through these stories that Vishnusharma taught them politics. Within six months, the princes became experts of politics and went back to their home.

Only this much of Vishnusharma is known. Whether his real name was Vishnusharma, or "Vishnusharma" was an imaginary name, we don't even know this. When he was born or when he died, is not known. We also don't know about his parents or when he wrote *Panchatantra*. What other books he wrote apart from *Panchatantra*, is also not known. Scholars say that *Panchatantra* was written during 200-300 AD.

There is discussion in *Panchatantra* on five subjects : differences amongst friends, benefits of friends, crow and owl, destruction of what has been achieved and untested work.

In the *Panchatantra* edited by Hartel, there are 34 stories in first

part, 10 in the second, 18 in the third, 13 in the fourth and 12 stories in the fifth part. The speciality is that the first story of each part is the main story of that part. There are smaller stories interwoven in the main story, but the sum and substance of the main story and the smaller stories indicates how the main story ended.

The stories of *Panchatantra* are not only for amusement. He has explained the basic principles of ethics through them. Every story explains some or the other facet of ethics. Even the sum and substance of political policies of Manu, Shupra and Chanakya have been explained in such a simple and interesting manner that even a layman can easily comprehend that. Sir William Jones, former Chief Justice of Calcutta Supreme Court had rightly said about Vishnusharma's stories that these are the best and oldest of all the stories of the world.

In the first part, Vishnusharma told the princes a story to explain the differences amongst friends. The story is that an ox named Sanjivak and a lion named Pinglak became fast friends. Two Jackals—Kartak and Damnak—who were the sons of jungle king Pinglak's previous minister did not like this friendship and both of them thought of a plan to break this friendship.

There was a long discussion between Damnak and Kartak — as to how to make Pinglak and Sanjivak quarrel, so that Pinglak may kill his good friend Sanjivak. Several interesting stories have been told during political debate between Damnak and Kartak. First story is of a monkey who lost his tail because of his foolishness. The second story is of a jackal who was afraid of the sound of a drum, but later he found out that it was the hollow part of a drum. Several short stories follow and at the end Damnak tells king Pinglak that ox have always been the subjects of prey so why he has kept ox Sanjivak as his friend. The jackal is successful and the lion Pinglak kills his best friend Sanjivak — the ox. However, the lion becomes sad on seeing his blood stained paws. The cunning jackal intervenes and again counsels the king to make him get rid of the sadness. At the end, Damnak is successful in his plan of becoming a minister of the king of jungle Pinglak.

The essence of all the stories of the first part is how to create differences between two kings so that they kill each other. Similarly, the other four basic principles of politics have been explained in the other four parts with the help of stories and sub-stories with which the three princes became experts of politics.

The main characters of these stories and sub-stories are either animals or birds. However, the stories of these birds and animals are so interesting and educative that we read them eagerly even after two thousand years. They seem to be new despite being so old. Their originality transcends the limitation of country and time. The meaning conveyed by the stories two thousand years back is relevant even today. Children of the present world read these interesting stories narrated two thousand years back. The stories are so interesting that after the end of one story, the reader wants to finish reading all the stories.

The stories of *Panchatantra* are not only interesting but also educative. In the religious scriptures of Hindus, more importance is given to life after death, however in the moral aphorisms mentioned in *Panchatantra* through the verses, importance is given to the mundane matters. How to live in the world, how to behave with others—has been told to us by Vishnusharma through his stories. There is no doubt that the author of *Panchatantra* was aware of the secrets of the material world and he knew how to use it. In his *Panchatantra*, he filled the dry subject of mundane matters with interesting stories.

Somebody had rightly said that not only the stories of *Panchatantra* are interesting and educative, equally interesting is the story of propagation of *Panchatantra* to other parts of the country and to foreign countries. It was translated into several languages and so many other stories were woven on the basis of these stories.

There are five versions of *Panchatantra*, in India itself. First one is the 'Tantrakhyayika'. When this edition of *Panchatantra* was prepared, it is not known, but there is no doubt that several stories were added which did not exist in the original *Panchatantra*. Probably, a Jain living in western India wrote it at the beginning

of 1100 A.D. A Jain saint named Purnabhadra prepared its second edition in 1199 A.D.

Five versions based on one edition of *Panchatantra* are found in South India too. Scholars say, that the original *Panchatantra* has been followed, though in brief, in these versions. According to a western scholar, three-fourth of the prose and two-third of poetry is conserved in these editions. However, the first edition of South India was written only after the poet Mahakavi Bharavi. Bharavi wrote in 500 AD. There is a Nepali version also which is prior to *Hitopadesha*. Another version of *Panchatantra* is popular in Bengal by the name of *Hitopdesha*. The author of *Hitopdesha* was Narayan and his patron was king Dhawalchandra. Though there are stories of *Panchatantra* in *Hitopadesha*, but there are several differences between the two.

Panchatantra has been translated into several foreign languages too. The truth is that there is hardly any language of the civilized world, in which *Panchatantra* has not been translated. For the first time Burjoi translated *Panchatantra* in ancient Iranian language 'Pahalvi' around 550 AD, which is not available now. On the basis of this translation, *Panchatantra* was translated into Siamese language of Siam and after some time an Arabic version followed. After the Arabic version, a new version came out in Siamese language in 10th or 11th century and it was translated into Greek by the end of 11th century. *Panchatantra* was translated into Ibrani language in 11th century and into German in the midst of 13th century. *Panchatantra* was translated into Spanish by the end of 15th century. It was translated into Italian on the basis of the Spanish version and later, it was translated into French.

The stories of *Panchatantra* were popular in eastern countries through "Anwar-Suheli", the Persian version of *Panchatantra*. 'Anwaar-Suheli' has been translated into Turkish, French, German, Dutch and even Malaya language.

There is no count available of translations of *Panchatantra*. Its stories transcend the limitations of countries and times. They are new despite being so ancient. *Panchatantra* is an immortal gift of India to the world.

ARYABHATTA

—R.N. Tiwari

JUST as India gave the world the numeric system of numbers one to nine in the field of mathematics, similarly it brought about a big revolution by inventing the decimal. The world benefitted a lot by this invention. The great person who invented the decimal was Aryabhatta.

Before even Aryabhatta, from the Vedic age, the scholars of the country had been studying astrology and mathematics, and from time to time, they made several inventions. There are many indications in the Rigveda that the Indians were already advanced in the field of mathematics and astrology. They attributed the day, night, season and the year to the sun. They also knew that the moon gets its light from the light of the sun. By the movement of the sun they could determine when the spring season would start and when the winter season would set in. Some western scholars even say that they knew about the axis of the earth.

During the time of Yajurveda, Brahmanas, Upanishads, Astrology and Mathematics were famous as 'Nakshatra Vidya', 'Rashividya' and 'Shulkavidya' (geometry) and their knowledge was essential for the scholars of Vedas. During the 'Sutrakaal', mathematics and astrology were considered to be a part of the Vedas and from then this was famous as 'Vedanga' which meant a part of the Vedas.

We find words like Nakshatra — 'Nakshatra-dash', 'Ganak' etc in 'Shukla Yajurveda', though names of most of the mathematicians and astrologers have disappeared. In this age, only the name of Garga is remembered who wrote the 'Gargasamhita'. However the text written by him has been altered so many times that it is now difficult to say that this same text was written by Maharishi Garga.

Jyotishacharya Lagadh came after Maharishi Garga, whose text "Yajush Vedanga Jyotish" is available now. Lagadh was a resident of Kashmir. Dikshit and Tilak have determined that this

text was written 3400 years from today. There is no mention of zodiac signs in this text. This text only mentions the movement of twenty seven Nakshatras and the five yearly cycle of the sun and the moon. Three ancient codes also indicate the same.

There is very little known about Aryabhatta. His place of birth was Kusumpur or Pataliputra (modern Patna) and he was born in 473 AD. He started writing from 499 AD when he was 26 years old. Three of his texts are available. In the first text named 'Aryabhattachiya' there are ten shlokas in ten Arya Chands (metre). In the second text called 'Dash-Deshika-Sutra' he has described his counting system. The third text is 'Aryashtashat' which has 108 shlokas—Mathematics is described in 33 shlokas, measurement of time has been explained in 25 shlokas and Geography has been explained in the rest of 50 shlokas.

It is important to mention here that Aryabhatta for the first time gave an independent status to Mathematics by separating it from the science of Astrology in his texts. After the discovery of 'Surya-Siddhant', one western scholar said that Aryabhatta has been given too much credit, as whatever he had written, is much similar to the principles enunciated in the "Surya Siddhant".

According to Aryabhatta, the earth is round and rotates on its axis. Aryabhatta did not believe much in the height of 'Meru' mountain. According to him lunar eclipse did not happen because of 'Rahu' swallowing the moon, but because the earth came in between the moon and the sun.

Here, it is essential to say that Aryabhatta I who has been our subject in this chapter was different from Aryabhatta II. Aryabhatta II wrote a comprehensive treatise called 'Arya-Siddhant' in the tenth century. The counting system in 'Arya-Siddhant' is very different from the counting system of Aryabhatta I. This is the reason why scholars say that the author of 'Arya Siddhant' was different from Aryabhatta I.

As it has been mentioned earlier, Aryabhatta I gave for the first time independent recognition to mathematics in Astrology. His counting system was unique. To express numbers from 1 to 25

he used consonants from 'Ka' upto 'Pa' group and consonants from 'Ya' to 'Ha' were symbols of numbers 30 to 100.

Two great astrologers were born in India after Aryabhatta. One was Varahmihira who wrote in the sixth century. It is said that Varahmihir died in the year 587 A.D and his period of writing was 550 A.D. It is not known when and where he was born and neither do we know about his parents. He has discussed about the old five principles in his text named 'Panchasiddhantika'. These five principles relating to lunar eclipse have already been discussed. He considered Aryabhatta's principle as wrong and strongly criticized Aryabhatta for expressing his beliefs against the prevalent views.

The second was Brahmagupta who was born in the year 598 A.D. His birth place is a village called Bhillamalla near Multan. His father's name was 'Jishnu'. He wrote 'Brahma Siddhant' or 'Sfut Siddhant' in the year 628 A.D. In the year 665 A.D he wrote his second text called "Khand-Khadyak". He explained the simple rules of astrological calculations. This text is supposed to be written on the basis of the extinct text of Aryabhatta. But he has severely criticized the principle of lunar eclipse established by Aryabhatta in the eleventh chapter of 'Arya Siddhant'. It has to be accepted that Brahmagupta was also an authority in the science of mathematics like Aryabhatta.

NAGARJUNA

—Prabhakar Machwe

THERE have been several such great persons in the olden times of whom nothing much is known except for the name. Nagarjuna is also one such person. He was a great thinker of Buddhist ideology, though a couple of persons are also famous by the name of Nagarjuna.

But Nagarjuna, whom we are referring to, was a Buddhist philosopher and a man of extraordinary talent. He started a new era in Buddhist philosophy and gave it a new direction. He enunciated the "Madhyamik" view in Buddhist philosophy, which is also known as "Shoonyavad (Nihilism)". The Mahayana branch of Buddhism had two sub-branches—Madhyamik Secondary and Yogachar (Yoga Practices). It is said that Nagarjuna laid the foundation of Madhyamik branch of Mahayana.

Some people say that he was the same famous scientist Nagarjuna of the ancient times. He is worshipped like a God in Tibet. Some say he was a great painter while some are of the view that he was a famous writer.

Heard the name 'Kimiya' (Alchemy)? i.e. to turn copper into gold. Lakhs of people of the world have toiled for years to achieve this magic. It is said that Nagarjuna knew about this science of chemistry. There is a reference of Nagarjuna in this respect in the book "The History of Indian Chemistry" written by Shri. Prafulla Chandra Rai.

Dr. Radhakrishnan has referred to Nagarjuna as a Brahmin of South India in his book. Kumarjeev wrote his biography in Chinese language in the year 405 A.D.

According to him Nagarjuna was born in the second century in Southern Kosal or Barar. People consider him even older than that.

According to Sharatchandra Das, as per the story of Indian ancient history which exists with Dalai Lama of Tibet, Nagarjuna existed even earlier in 56 BC which means two thousand years back.

Chinese traveller Yuan Chwang has written that Nagarjuna lived four hundred years after the death of Buddha in Southern Kosal (Barar) and that he attained 'Bodhisatva' or enlightenment. Whatever be the truth, he must have existed fifteen hundred years back, as there is a mention of the sect he formed in books written later.

His view is called 'Madhyamik' i.e. the middle path. Buddha in his first sermon at Sarnath had talked about the need for treading on the middle path. He said that one of the paths in our life is of extreme luxury and the other is of penance. There is a third path in between the two ways of luxury and penance. However, the Madhyamik sect is different from the 'Madhyam Marg' as propagated by Buddha. The meaning of the middle path as per the Madhyamik version is that it cannot be said whether anything exists or does not exist, neither can the evolution of any thing be proved nor its destruction can be proved. In brief, the Madhyamik view neither accepts the truth of the world nor the untruth of the world. Whereas, Buddha emphasised upon the moral aspect of the Madhyam Marg in his sermons, the Madhyamik view lays emphasis on the philosophical aspect.

The Madhyamik view of Nagarjuna is also called 'Shoonyavad' because Nagarjuna believed that there was no difference between the world and nothingness.

Very little information is available about the life of Nagarjuna. Gautam's son, King Yagyashri (166-196 A.D), was his friend. It is said that there was no other expert of treatises like Nagarjuna in those times.

Nagarjuna, in his childhood was such an intelligent student that he learnt the 'Tripitak' which had several thousand pages in only 90 days. Even then he was not satisfied. He went to an old monk who lived in the Himalayas. From there he got the 'Mahayan Satra'. He spent his later life in a place called 'Shri Shailam' in South India. He started a school of Buddhism there. It is written

in some Tibetan books that he also lived in Nalanda for a few years. Chinese traveller Yuan Chwang has written : "There have been four suns illuminating the earth. Nagarjuna is one of them. The other three are Ashwaghosh, Kumarlabdha and Aryadev."

Many of the books of Nagarjuna were translated into Chinese. They are about twenty in number. It is a strange fact that none of them is available in India. However, these books are available in Chinese language. Nagarjuna had written some letters to his friend King Yagyashri. These are famous as 'Suhallekh'. Ancient Chinese traveller I-Tsing has written that Indian children remembered this book by heart. This contained his sermons on ethics.

Nagarjuna's thoughts spread to China and Japan. These were called 'San-Lun' or 'San-Ren' which meant 'three books'. The first one of these books was written by Nagarjuna. This book was discovered originally in Sanskrit by Professor Shcharbatski in 1927 and was published by him. Kumarjeeva translated this book in Chinese language in the year 409 A.D. It contains four hundred couplets and the name of the book is "Barah Raaste" or the twelve paths. This was also written by Nagarjuna. It is not available in its original form in Sanskrit. Only its Chinese translation is available. The third book's name is 'Shat-Shastra'. It has been written by Aryadev-the disciple of Nagarjuna. The followers of the 'Shira' branch also attribute the fourth book 'Shih-Lun' to Nagarjuna. When Nagarjuna's book reached China, many followers like Taosheng, Taan chi and Seng Lang believed in his sermons. In the seventh century A.D, a Korean student Chitsang Ek baan (Lui Kuan) took this sect to Japan. This was taught in Gwangoji school at Nara in the year 625 A.D. It is known as 'Ku' 'Ga' (nothingness) sect in Chinese.

Everyone knows about Nagarjuna through a very famous book of his which is called 'Mool Madhyamkarika'. He himself wrote a commentary, on this book called 'Akutobhaya'. His sect is also called 'Shoonyavad', probably due to the reason that he refuted all what was written earlier by thinkers. He said that what we call 'sorrow' is untruth. Everything keeps changing. Hence, Nagarjuna

made everything void or zero. Nagarjuna said that the world is like a mirage, Gandharvanagar, Maya (Illusion) or a dream — about which it cannot be ascertained whether it exists or does not exist.

Nagarjuna, interestingly brought several of the Gods worshipped by the Hindus into Buddhist philosophy. Indra becomes Shatmanyu, Vajrapani and Shakra. Heaven is Trayanstrish Lok. Brahma's (attributes) exist in Manjushri. Saraswati and Lakshmi are his wives. Vishnu's attributes are in Avlokiteshwar or Padmapani. Virupaksh was one name of Shiva. He is a king in one of the stories of Buddhist philosophy. Ganesh comes in the form of Vinayak and a destroyer of demons. Sapta Tathagat are the seven saints. Ajit, Shakyamuni and Avlokiteshwar are the three Gods of Buddhist religion. Nagarjuna's way of worship of Buddha was similar to the Hindu way of worship.

Instead of going into deep intricacies, it is sufficient to say that Nagarjuna was such a great thinker and philosopher that his name spread far and wide out of India. Nagarjuna's name is worth mentioning amongst those who fostered relations between the Indian and Chinese people.

SAMUDRAGUPTA

—Dronveer Kohli

AFTER Ashoka, the Maurya empire was split into many kingdoms. There were foreign invasions from the North-West. Some of the Greeks coming with Alexander were settled in Bactria. These were the first Greeks to come to India. Their greatest king was Minander or Milind who embraced the Buddhist religion. After the Greeks, the Shakas came, followed by Kushans. The biggest emperor of Kushan dynasty was Kanishka who adopted Buddhism. He was very brilliant and his empire spread from Peshawar to Patna.

After Kanishka, the Kushan dynasty, in its third generation, got scattered. India again started being attacked by foreigners. The weak heirs of Kanishka could not control the situation. The result was that political unity of Northern India was destroyed and several smaller states came into existence. These states fought amongst themselves.

In such circumstances, the rise of Gupta dynasty started in India in the beginning of the fourth century. Shrigupta or Gupta was the first ruler of this clan. Chandragupta I, the third ruler of this dynasty, was very powerful. He laid special attention on good governance. After a few years, it became clear that the supremacy of Gupta dynasty would be established all over India.

It is known from one of the Gupta period records that Samudragupta had several brothers. Immediately after he was crowned the king, Samudragupta understood the fact that unless they fight and face the foreign invasion unitedly, it was impossible for the country to prosper and grow.

Some scholars say that after Chandragupta I, his other son 'Kach' also ruled. The reason for this is that several coins similar to Samudragupta's coins have been found which have 'Kach' engraved on them. Smith has opined that the person named 'Kach'

was perhaps Samudragupta's brother. But it is difficult to accept this view. On one side of these coins is written 'Sarvarajocheta' which was Samudragupta's title. It is also possible that the first name of Samudragupta was 'Kach' and after his marriage he kept his name 'Samudragupta' based on the names of his lineage. It is also possible that on being "Aasamudrakshitish" and conquering the entire region, he kept his name so. According to Dr. Bhandarkar, 'Kach' was Ramgupta.

The great task accomplished by Samudragupta was his great victory or the 'Digvijay'. By this, his small state from the coastal areas of Ganges between Prayag and Magadh and some parts of Ayodhya became a big empire. The details of his victory are inscribed on the Ashoka edicts which is also called the 'Prashasti Lekh' of Prayag.

First of all, Samudragupta fought against the nine states of Aryavarta. By uprooting their kings, he included these states in his kingdom.

After that Samudragupta moved towards the South. The victory over the rulers of Dakshinapath was impossible unless he won over the states on way to the Dakshinapath states. These states were in the region full of the forests of Central India. Samudragupta defeated these kings of forest states as well and made them subservient.

The states of Dakshinapath were far off from Samudragupta's base. Hence Samudragupta was not afraid of them. He took all their wealth but did not occupy their physical territory. First he made them prisoners by defeating them. Then he returned their states. These kings were twelve in number. The famous king of Kanchi, Vishnugop was one of them. It is said that Samudragupta returned hoisting his flag from Cher or Kerala in the remote South and through the Khan state in Maharashtra.

On being terrified by the victories of Samudragupta, the kings of states of border areas of his empire accepted to pay all types of taxes to Samudragupta. Their desire was to please and appease Samudragupta by all means of service to him. These border states were Purvabanga, Assam, Nepal and the hilly states of Himachal.

Similar to these border states were some republics who thought its better to bow before the power and valour of Samudragupta. These states were like that of Panchayati states which were once ruled by independent tribes. Their militarism and power were well-known. The main places were Punjab, Rajputana and Madhyaprant. Important amongst them were Malav, Yaudheya and Aabhir.

Apart from these, there were some states probably outside the physical boundaries of India. Due to Samudragupta's Digvijay, they too became friends. They also bowed before Samudragupta like others and tried pleasing him by paying taxes etc.

Hence, the Gupta kingdom spread wide due to Samudragupta's great victory. Samudragupta's kingdom not only included the present Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal etc. but many more principalities. The forest states of Central India and Madhya Prant (central region), the far off states of Dakshinapath, the border states and the republics of Rajputana and Central India accepted his supremacy. Apart from this, the king of Sinhal, Shak and Kushan kings of Afghanistan sent gifts to him.

Samudragupta performed an 'Ashwamedha Yagya' after this victory of India. In ancient times, the king after great victory, used to perform Ashwamedha Yagya for declaring his victory. The victorious king let out a horse. This horse used to march to all the states followed by a huge army. Whoever captured the horse, had to fight with the king doing the 'Ashwamedha Yagya' in the battle field. If he lost, he had to bow before the king who set out the horse. Before Samudragupta, for a long time, there had not been such an illustrious king. On this occassion, Samudragupta released gold coins, on which was engraved the picture of the Ashwamedh horse on one side, and Samudragupta's queen on the other with 'Ashwamedha Parakram' written on it. He also gave lots of alms and donation on this occasion.

However, the greatness and fame of a ruler does not only depend on his victories and armed power. Ashoka became famous more after he left his war policy rather than due to his victory over Kalinga. Similarly, Samudragupta also had certain qualities which make his name immortal in Indian history. Apart from being skilled

in war strategies, he was also a connoisseur of literature, arts and music. It is written in 'Prayag Prashasti'—with his knowledge of shastras, he even put to shame the teacher of Gods-Brihaspati and excelled Narad and Tumbhari with his skills in music and fine arts.

He respected and liked the company of scholars and experts of treatises. He was bestowed the title king of poets', for his poetry.

Samudragupta was a lover of music too. He was very much skilled in Veena recital. This is clear from the coins that were prevalent in his times. These coins have pictures of Samudragupta playing the Veena engraved on them.

Besides, Samudragupta gave respect to scholars also. His court respected poets, artists and musicians and Samudragupta always encouraged them.

The people of Samudragupta's empire had the freedom to follow the religion of their own choice. Samudragupta made a Buddhist named Basubandhu as his minister. He allowed a Buddhist ruler of Sri Lanka to construct his monastery in Bodh Gaya.

The period of Gupta dynasty is referred to as the Golden period in history. The reason was that North India was united during this period. Management of government was done very efficiently. Judicial system was excellent. People followed rules and regulations. Gupta rulers did several things for the welfare of the people.

By uniting the states of India, Samudragupta laid the foundation of a prosperous country. His talent was evident right from childhood. He impressed everyone with his valour and intelligence, even as a prince.

Samudragupta ruled for 40 to 50 years. He was a great and able ruler. His personality was imposing and he had several unique qualities. Samudragupta was not only a great warrior of his times but also a big politician. He was also a cultured and intelligent person. Historian Smith has called him the Indian 'Napolean' which is quite apt due to his great victory or 'Digvijay'.

KUMARJEEVA

—R.N. Tiwari

FOR the last so many years, we Indians are raising the slogan 'Hindi-Chini— Bhai-Bhai (Indians and Chinese are brothers) but many of us probably do not know that this brotherhood has been in existence for atleast last two thousand years. India gave China the gift of Buddhism and propagated Indian culture in China. Credit of this largely goes to those Indian and Chinese scholars who expanded the Buddhist religion and Indian culture there.

First name amongst such Indian and Chinese travellers and scholars is of Kumarjeeva. He not only spread the Buddhist religion in China but also played an important role in establishing friendly relations between the two countries. Kumarjeeva existed in the fourth century A.D.

Kumarjeeva's father's name was Kumarrayan. Kumarrayan was born in a noble family. He was the Diwan (Chief Minister) of a princely state of India. Due to some reason he gave up his post of Diwan. After this he left India and proceeded towards the town of Kuchi.

Kuchi was situated in Central Asia to the north of river Tarim. To the south of Tarim valley was the town of Khotan. Both the towns had routes to go to China. Both the towns were considered to be the centres of Buddhist learning. Chinese traveller Fahyan has given a very interesting description of the towns of Kuchi and Khotan in his travelogues.

Travel in those times was a very difficult task. More so, several problems had to be faced on the route outside India. There were neither roads nor bridges. One had to pass through rivers, gorges, mountains and forests. By looking at these difficulties in travelling, Kumarrayan's journey was a great act of courage.

After reaching Kuchi, Kumarrayan started living in a Buddhist monastery. Slowly, the fame of his scholarship and abilities spread

far and wide. On hearing about Kumarrayan's praise, the king of Kuchi requested Kumarrayan to accept the post of 'Rajguru' in his court. Kumarrayan after much thinking, accepted the king's proposal and he was appointed to the post of 'Rajguru'. He was married to a woman named 'Devi' belonging to the royal family of Kuchi. After some time Kumarrayan's wife gave birth to a son. This boy later became famous as the great Kumarjeeva.

Kumarrayan died after few years of birth of his son Kumarjeeva. Kumarjeeva's mother became a Buddhist monk. When Kumarjeeva grew up, his mother brought him to Kashmir for his studies. Kashmir was considered to be a centre for the followers of Buddhism. There, Kumarjeeva deeply studied the Buddhist religion and the Sanskrit language from a Kashmiri scholar called Bandhudutta. Soon the authority of Kumarjeev's erudition spread to far off countries and many Buddhist followers came to him from Eastern Turkmenistan to learn Buddhism.

On returning from Kashmir Kumarjeeva went to Kashgar. There he met Buddhayash and soon both of them became good friends. Buddhayash those days lived in the royal palace. He was a well known scholar of Buddhist philosophy. Kumarjeeva and Buddhayash together studied the Buddhist Scriptures. Kumarjeeva gained more knowledge gained from his intelligence. By completing his studies there, he went back to Kuchi. Kumarjeeva could not live in peace in Kuchi for a long time. The king of Kuchi had some dispute with the Chinese emperor. As a result, a big chinese army attacked the town of Kuchi. The residents of Kuchi fought bravely to protect themselves but finally they had to accept defeat. The state of Kuchi was merged in the Chinese Empire.

During this war, the Chinese army made several people their prisoners. Amongst these prisoners was Kumarjeeva also. This incident happened in the year 383 A.D. The Chinese took these prisoners with them to China. However, Kumarjeeva's fame had already reached China even before he reached the country as a prisoner. Hence, Kumarjeeva did not get the death sentence, but he was compelled to stay with the Governor of a Chinese state called Lishan-Cho for eighteen years.

A new era of Buddhism began after Kumarjeeva reached China. Earlier Chinese translations of Buddhist treatises were not pure. Kumarjeeva knew about all the branches of Buddhism thoroughly. He had full command over Sanskrit and Chinese language. Hence, he could translate the books of Buddhism with much more authority. He was greatly successful in translating the inner meaning of Buddhism as compared to his predecessors. This is the reason why his translations of Buddhist treatises are accepted more in China.

It is essential here to mention that the followers of Buddhism were divided into two branches after the death of Buddha. First branch was famous as Mahayan and the second branch came to be known as Therwad (Heenyan). Even these branches were divided into several sub branches. Kumarjeeva was a follower of "Sarwaastivad" a sub branch of Mahayan. He translated about hundred famous texts of "Sarwaastivad" branch into Chinese language. 'Vinaypitak' is his first translation. Infact, this text is a translation of one chapter of a famous treatise of Mahayan branch called "Yogachar-Bhoomi-Shastra". Before Kumarjeeva, two Indian priests had translated it into Chinese language. But their translations had several mistakes. However, Kumarjeeva's translation was more similar to the original text. After this, he translated another treatise called 'Brahmajal Sutra' from Sanskrit into Chinese. The original Sanskrit text is not available now, but the Buddhists of China have greatly appreciated this text.

Kumarjeeva diligently completed the translation of "Mahapragya-Parimita Sutra" in three years. In the same year, he published the Chinese translation of "Deshbumi — Vibhasha Shastri". Before his death Kumarjeeva also translated "Sutralankar Shastra" into Chinese language. Not only this, Kumarjeeva had also written commentary on the prevalent 'Tao' religion of China.

Alongwith the translations of Buddhist texts, Kumarjeeva also started propagating the Mahayanas sect through his speeches. Many of the Chinese Buddhists considered him as their teacher and felt themselves fortunate to listen to his sermons.

Two Kashmiri scholars helped Kumarjeeva a lot in translating

of Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Chinese. They were Vimlaksh and Punyatrat. Punyatrat lived in alongwith China only for a year, while Vimlaksh lived there for eight years and translated the Buddhist texts in Chinese language alongwith Kumarjeeva.

Buddhayash's name has been mentioned earlier. When he was in Kashgar, he heard that Kumarjeeva has been sent to China as a prisoner. This saddened him and he decided to go to China. First he went to Kuchi and after staying there for a few days, he went to China. After ascertaining the whereabouts of Kumarjeeva, he went up to him. Kumarjeeva was elated to see Buddhayash. Both the friends embraced each other. Buddhayash started to live there and translated the Buddhist text into Chinese along with Kumarjeeva. He helped Kumarjeeva in spreading the message of Buddhism.

Buddhayash lived in China till Kumarjeeva was alive. But after Kumarjeeva's death, he returned to Kashmir. When he was leaving for Kashmir, the Chinese emperor wanted to give him a departing gift. But Buddhayash refused the gift saying that he is a Buddhist monk and accepting any sort of gift is against the principles of Buddhism.

Kumarjeeva strived throughout his life in spreading the principles of Mahayan. He died in a foreign nation propagating the Indian culture and Buddhist principles. We must not forget the simplicity of his life. He used to appeal to the people to accept his works but not to consider his life as an ideal. Lotus grows in mud and one should be like the lotus, not the mud. To establish friendly relations between India and China became the objective of life of Kumarjeeva. He strived to fulfil this objective till his death.

Finally, one other fact needs to be mentioned. Most of the Indian scholars and travellers who went to China were from Kashmir. They went during those times when travelling was very difficult. They spread Buddhism to China and created a sympathy towards Indian culture. The brotherhood that was developed by Kashmiri scholars and travellers in the first ten centuries exists even now. Kumarjeeva's name is at the top amongst such Indians also.

CHANDRAGUPTA VIKRAMADITYA

—R.N. Tiwari

VIKRAMADITYA means “shining bright like the sun” The fifth emperor of Gupta dynasty-Chandragupta was truly bright and talented like the sun. The Gupta period has been termed as the Golden Age of Indian history. You have just read about Samudragupta.

Chandragupta II was the son of the same Samudragupta. Chandragupta II sat on the royal throne in the year 306 A.D. Immediately after sitting on the throne, he gave attention to expansion of his empire like his father. He had already decided to crush the Shaka kings of Malwa and Gujarat. Hence, the first task he did was to prepare for attack on these two states.

Chandragupta was very intelligent and a good strategist. King Rudrasen, the second of Vakatak dynasty, ruled over the area south of his empire and to the east of Gujarat and Malwa. The kingdom of Vakataks was very powerful. Chandragupta understood that if he attacked Malwa and Gujarat without a treaty with the Vakataks, the Vakatak ruler could create hurdles.

Hence, Chandragupta considered to make peace with the Vakatak ruler. He married off his daughter named Prabhawati to king Vakatak Rudrasen. Now Vakatak King Rudrasen became his relative and a friend. After this Chandragupta being rest assured, attacked Malwa and Gujarat. He crushed the Shaka kings of both the states and thus, he threw out the foreign rulers who had ruled the Indian soil since centuries.

There is an iron pillar near Qutab Minar in a place called Mehrauli in Delhi. On it is written about a king named Chandra who defeated several kings of Bengal in the East and after that also defeated the King of Balhik (Bactria) by crossing the Sindhu (Indus) river in the West on the other side of Afghanistan and Hindukush mountain. According to the proofs

available in History, it can be said that the person named Chandra who went on the victory journey from Bengal in the East and Balhik in the West, was none other than Chandragupta Vikramaditya of the Gupta clan.

Chandragupta added Bengal, Malwa, Gujarat and areas of Saurashtra to his Empire. Bengal was the most productive state in those times. There was no dearth of prosperity after Bengal's inclusion in the Gupta Empire.

The business of Arabian sea also came in his hands after the inclusion of Malwa, Gujarat and Saurashtra. Goods were exported to foreign countries from the ports and traders earned lots of money. Ujjain, the capital of Malwa was a famous centre of trade. Chandragupta made Ujjain the second Capital of his empire. The real capital was, however in Pataliputra.

During Chandragupta's reign, Fa-hien was the Buddhist monk who came on foot to India via Peshawar after crossing the Gobi Desert from China to study Buddhist treatises. Travelling from Peshawar to Punjab, from Punjab to Mathura, Kashmir, Sankashya, Kannauj, Shravasti, Kushinagar, Vaishali and other states, he reached Pataliputra. He stayed in Patliputra for three years and studied Sanskrit language.

We get a good glimpse of the social, political and religious conditions of India under Chandragupta's rule in details of Fa-hien's travel in India. These details are available in a book "Fo-kwo-ki" written by Fa-hien.

According to Fa-hien, the Brahmin (mythological Hindu) religion was dominant in Chandragupta's reign. Chandragupta himself was a vaishnav. However, Buddhists and followers of other religious sects had freedom to follow their own religions. Chandragupta himself had two such ministers, of whom one believed in the Shaiva religion and the other in Buddhism. People did not indulge in eating meat or drinking and neither were there any such shops. Non-violence was predominant.

It was the time when Hinduism was becoming stronger while Buddhism was deteriorating. Only in the Punjab and Bengal, was

Buddhism more prevalent. Fa-hien has very clearly written that there was no religious discrimination on the part of the state. From Fa-hien's writings about the political and administrative system of Chandragupta, it is known that the administration was good.

No high taxes were imposed on the people and the populace were happy and prosperous. Everyone had the right to choose the profession of choice. The strict laws of criminal offences that Fa-hien had seen in China, were not seen in Chandragupta's reign. Death penalty was not given even in the biggest offence and punishment given for a serious offence like treason was amputation of the right hand of the traitor. The prisoners were not tortured physically. There was no trace of crimes such as theft and dacoity. Fa-hien himself has written that he passed through lonely roads and jungles carrying valuables and unique books, but he was never harassed and nor did he become a victim of dacoity.

Fa-hien stayed in Pataliputra for three years. Describing the town, he writes that everyone was amazed on seeing the beauty of the palace built by Ashoka. It seemed that the palace was built by Gods and not by human beings. He has written that there were several beautiful towns in the state of Magadh and there were public inns for travellers to stay. Rich people opened hospitals and bore all expenses to run them. The poor patients got free medicine and food in these hospitals.

Fa-hien's description, though right to a great extent, is wrong at few places. He is wrong when he says that there were no shops of meat and liquor in Chandragupta's rule and that people did not indulge in them. From Kalidasa's plays we come to know that people indulged both in eating meat and drinking. However, Fa-hien is right when he says that there was complete peace in the state, and the administrative system was such that theft, dacoity and murder happened rarely. Travellers did not fear from being robbed. The character of the people was very high and they were truthful and honest.

The Gupta emperors had introduced gold, silver and copper coins. Several gold coins of the times of Chandragupta Vikramaditya have been found in some areas of Malwa and western India.

Chandragupta was not only a brave and an illustrious warrior, he was also a scholar and an able administrator. Several academicians, poets and experts flourished during his reign. His nine jewels (Navratnas) are famous in history. Who does not know the name of Kalidasa ? This great poet was one of the nine jewels of Chandragupta. It is said that Dhanwantri-the famous doctor and author of *Amarkosh* lived during the times of Chandragupta. Buddhist scholars Vasu-vandhu, Dignaag, famous mathematician and astrologer Aryabhatta and Varahmihira also lived around the same time.

Chandragupta was a very religious king who had great respect for scholars and about the well-being of the people. Apart from Vikramaditya, he was also known by other titles like 'Vikramank', 'Narendra Chandra 'Singh Vikram', 'Singh Chandra' etc.

After freeing the Indian territory completely from foreign rule, Chandragupta ruled peacefully for thirty nine years. This glorious king of Gupta dynasty died in the year 414 A.D approximately. His son Kumargupta became the king and sat on his throne.

KALIDASA

—P.N. Tripathi

YOU must have surely heard the name of the great poet Kalidasa. *Abhigyan Shakuntalam*, *Malvikagnimitra* and *Vikramorvashi* - the plays written by him are famous not only in our country, but in the entire world. In literature, it is said plays are the best and in the plays *Shakuntalam* is the best.

Kalidasa also wrote poetic literature like *Meghdoot*, *Kumarsambhav* and *Raghuvansh*. Some people think that Kalidasa also wrote the book of poetry, "Ritu Samhar". It was due to his unique poetic talent that Kalidasa was conferred with honours like 'Sakal Kavi Shiromani' and 'Kavikul Guru'.

The first quality of his poetry was that Kalidasa wrote poems successfully in all prevalent forms till that time. He wrote plays like *Abhigyan Shakuntalam*, epics like *Raghuvansh* and *Kumarsambhava* and a long episodic poem *Meghdoot*.

The second quality of Kalidasa was his simple, easy and beautiful language. In Sanskrit, generally, the sweetness of language vanishes due to difficult compound words. Kalidasa saved his language from such difficult vocabulary. He wrote on minute subjects and feelings in simple and interesting language.

The third quality of Kalidasa is that he has described almost all the sentiments (Rasas) successfully. He is an expert in describing the 'Shringar Rasa'- the amatory sentiment. His poetry has great detail of 'Karuna-Rasa', sentiments of compassion and 'Vir-Rasa', sentiments of heroism. The sentiment of compassion has come out well in the fourth act of *Vikramorvarshi*, the sixth act of *Shakuntalam*, eighth act of *Raghuvansh* and the fourth chapter of *Kumarsambhava*. The sentiment of heroism is of the highest order in *Kumarsambhava* and in the third chapter of *Raghuvansh* while describing the war of Indra and Raghu.

The fourth quality of Kalidasa's poetry is that he has full

command over the figurative use. Specially he is a great poet of 'Upma' (simile). It is said 'Upma Kalidasasya' i.e. Kalidasa is the greatest poet to use similes. Due to one simile he used, his name became self choice 'Deepshikha Kalidas.' The verse in which this simile is used, describes the scene of *swayamvar* from amongst suitors (a ceremony in which bride selects her husband) of Indumati in *Raghuvansh*. The poet says:

*"Sancharini Deep Shikhaiv Ratrau,
Yam Yam Vyatiyay Patimvara sa.
Narendramargata iv Prapede,
Vivarn Bhavam Sa Sa Bhoomipalah"*

This meant darkness engulfs those windows facing the roads which the burning flame passes by. Similarly, the faces of those princes become pale whom Indumati passes by, i.e. rejects.

The description of any event or thing in the compositions of Kalidasa is of the highest order. By reading his description, it seems that the event is recreated in his poetry. Everyone must have seen a deer running in a jungle but nobody can describe it as beautifully as Kalidasa has described it in *Shakuntalam*: 'Oh charioteer! This deer is running ahead and turning its beautiful neck to see the chariot coming behind him. Due to the fear of arrow, it seems that the rear part of his body wants to enter into its front body. Due to exertion of running, its mouth is open and the grass grazed by it is spreading all over the way. By taking long strides, it seems he is more in the sky as compared to the earth.'

There is a minutely detailed and right description of the geography, animals, birds, flora and fauna of India in his poetry. He has also described in detail the administration and social system of his times. The poet Kalidasa seems to be an expert of fine arts too. He has aptly described in detail about music, dance and drawing etc. wherever required. He was equally aware of religions philosophy and spiritual ideologies.

Not much is known about the life of "Kavikulguru" Kalidasa. According to some view he was one of the nine jewels of King Bhoj. Some consider him as one of the jewels on the court of Chandragupta II Vikramaditya (4-5 century A.D). Some consider

Ramtek in Madhya Pradesh as his place of birth , some say Ujjain or Avanti or Kashmir was his birthplace. According to some, he was from Bengal and some say he was from the South. But indeed, he was from India.

There are some absurd tales famous about Kalidasa. It is not that these tales are all true. However, you will definitely learn something from them. One such tale is as follows.

It is said that Kalidasa was born in an ordinary family. He could not get education. Once in the jungle, he was cutting the same branch of the tree on which he was sitting. Some priests passed by at that time. These were those priests who had lost to a scholarly princess Vidyottama in an academic debate in a nearby town. Due to jealousy, they thought of insulting the princess with this foolish wood cutter. They asked Kalidasa to get down and lured him with wealth to follow their instructions. Kalidasa accepted the demand of the priests. They told Kalidasa to keep his mouth shut and to express himself only through gestures.

After reaching the town, the priests told Vidyottama, who had defeated them, that he was a great scholar. But he was keeping silence. Hence he would reply to your questions through gestures.'

Vidyottama agreed and raised a finger meaning that there is one God. But Kalidasa thought that she wanted to pierce his eye with her finger. Immediately, Kalidasa showed two fingers conveying that he would pierce both her eyes. However, the priests described this gesture as the two forms of God without attributes and with attributes. Then Vidyottama showed him five fingers. She meant that there are five elements in the world. But Kalidasa thought that Vidyottama wants to slap him. So, he showed his raised fist. The priests described this gesture as, though there are five elements in the world but the world evolves only when all the elements unite. Vidyottama had to marry Kalidasa according to the condition that she would marry the person who defeated her in an academic debate. As night descended, Kalidasa and Vidyottama head a camel braying. Vidyottamma asked, whose sound is this ? Kalidasa replied "Uttra", "Uttra" i.e. "camel, camel". The right word for camel in Sanskrit is "Ushtra". Seeing Kalidasa's poor knowledge,

Vidyottama understood the treachery of the priests. She threw out Kalidasa from her house and said that he had no right to stay in her house, unless he became more intelligent and learned than her.

Suffering from this insult, Kalidasa did hard penance in the temple of 'Kali'. It is said that 'Kali' on being pleased with his penance, granted him knowledge. From then onwards he kept his name as Kalidasa. After receiving the boon of knowledge Kalidasa returned and was welcomed by all. This tale seems to be untrue because can anyone gain knowledge without studying ? Yes, the meaning of this tale can be that though Kalidasa was very intelligent, he did not get any opportunity or inspiration to read and write. But after getting the inspiration in the form of Vidyottama, he quickly became literate and knowledgeable.

The plays and epics of Kalidasa have been translated into many languages of the world. The famous German poet Goethe has said in Kalidasa's praise, "If you want to search for flowers of youth, fruits of adulthood and other such things which influence the soul, if you want to search for peace in one place and if you want to witness together heaven and hell, I will reply only in one word—'Shakuntala' (*Abhigyan Shakuntalam*) and I have said everything."

I hope that on growing up you all will surely read the plays and epics of Mahakavi Kalidasa and witness the wonders of writings of this great and talented poet.

HARSHA

—Jagdish Goyal

THERE was a great king called Harsha or Harshavardhan in India. His empire was spread in the entire North India. His armies had crushed the entire area from Ganjam in the East to Valabhi in the west and from Himalayas in the North to Narmada in the South. The king of Kamrup, (which is now known as Assam) was a friend of Harsha. He had acknowledged supremacy of Harsha and never evaded him. Harsha tried to conquer Southern India, but was not successful.

The name of Harsha's father was Prabhakarvardhan. The Kingdom of Prabhakarvardhan was small. A few miles from the north west of Delhi is the ground of Kurukshetra. It is said that the war of Mahabharata took place here and the Pandavas had defeated the Kauravas. The area near this very Kurukshetra was the state of Prabhakarvardhan. Thaneshwar was the capital of this state. It was difficult for Prabhakarvardhan to rule in peace as the Huns would attack now and then from the north west side of the country.

But Prabhakarvardhan was very intelligent. He himself took upon the task of strengthening his kingdom and sent his two sons to fight with the Huns. The name of elder brother was Rajyavardhan and that of the younger one was Harshavardhan. Once, both the brothers were chasing the Huns, they heard that Prabhakarvardhan had become ill. Both the brothers decided that the elder brother would face the Huns and the younger would return home and take care of the father. Harshavardhan received the news of his father's death on reaching home. Sorrow engulfed the entire state. However, Harsha remained patient and did not allow any slackness in administration.

When Rajyavardhan returned home after victory over the Huns, both brothers met each other with love. The younger brother

Harshavardhan handed over the reigns of power to his elder brother Rajyavardhan.

However, Rajyavardhan's fate did not have happiness for him. His younger sister Rajyashree was married to King Grihvarman of Kannauj. One day, news came that Devgupta, the king of Malwa, had killed Grihvarman in a war and made Rajyashree a prisoner.

Rajyavardhan immediately marched to take revenge on the king of Malwa. King of Malwa was defeated in war and he sent a proposal for peace. Rajyavardhan accepted the proposal. However, the friend of the king of Malwa, Shashank who was the king of Gaud state, deceived and killed Rajyavardhan. Rajyashree somehow escaped and wandered alone in the jungles.

Harshavardhan was just sixteen years old at the time of death of Rajyavardhan. The entire burden of the empire was now on the young shoulders of Harshavardhan. However, Harshavardhan was unfazed. He mobilized his army soon and marched to Malwa to revenge his brother's murder. He defeated King Devgupta of Malwa and King Shashank of Gaud state very badly in the war.

After taking revenge of his brother's death, Harshavardhan went on to search for his sister Rajyashree. Rajyashree had somehow managed to reach the jungles of Vindhya mountains. She was very unhappy because of the death of her husband and brother. She considered herself unfortunate and held herself responsible for the death of her husband and brother. She felt that she did not have any other option left but to immolate herself on the pyre and become a 'Sati'.

When Harsha reached the jungles of Vindhya mountain in search of his sister, she was about to jump into the pyre. Harsha screamed and ran and pulled her away from the pyre. She had not even dreamt that God would send her brother Harsha for her rescue. Harsha embraced his sister. After this Rajyashree always lived with Harsha.

After destroying his enemies Harsha returned to Thaneshwar with his sister. Later, on the insistence of the people of Kannauj he included even Kannauj state in his Kingdom. Along with Thaneshwar he made Kannauj the second capital of his kingdom.

Then he thought of expanding his empire. He gathered a huge army consisting of elephants, chariots and infantry soldiers and fought continuously for six years. He won over several states. Punjab, Bengal, Kannauj, Mithila (Darbhanga) and Orissa became parts of his empire. In the south, his empire spread upto Vindhya mountains. Earlier it has been told that Harsha tried to win over Southern India. But on crossing the Vindhya mountain he had an encounter with Pulkeshin II, the illustrious Emperor of Chalukya dynasty. Harsha was defeated in this war. After this defeat, Harsha gave up his thought to expand his empire further. He engaged himself to consolidate his huge kingdom.

Harsha sat on the throne in the year 606 A.D and ruled for forty two years. His rule was considered prosperous in Indian history. He restored unity in the entire Northern India. The country progressed even in the field of literature and culture. Historical details before Harsha are not available, but there are enough details of Harsha's rule. The reason is that a poet named Baan of the court of Harsha, wrote 'Harshacharit'-a book in which there is detailed description of the life and time of Harsha. Apart from this, the famous Chinese traveller Yuan Chwang also had come to India during Harsha's reign. Much is known about Harsha's life through his travelogues.

Yuan Chwang was a Buddhist monk. He left China for India in search of Buddhist texts at the age of twenty nine. He stayed for several days in the famous Nalanda University. He has written that there were followers of Brahminic religion and Buddhist religion, but Buddhism was declining in most of the areas. Emperor Harsha, himself believed in Buddhism, but also worshipped 'Shiva' and 'Surya', the sun God. Governance during his reign was very good and scholars were greatly respected. There was peace everywhere and travellers moved around

fearlessly. Nalanda's fame had spread far and wide. Ten thousand students used to study there. People came even from foreign countries to study there.

Yuan Chwang was present in the huge religious conclave which took place in Kannauj. Scholars from all over India assembled in the conclave. There were debates on scriptures for five days and Yuan Chwang defeated all of them. Many people were irritated by being badly defeated by Yuan Chwang and they began to plot his murder. When Harsha came to know about this he made an announcement that the person attempting to even hurt Yuan Chwang would be beheaded. After this, the conclave ended peacefully.

Harsha requested Yuan Chwang to stay in India, but he declined the invitation. So, Harsha arranged for his journey back to China and bade farewell to him. After returning to China, for nineteen years, Yuan Chwang translated Buddhist texts into Chinese language.

Yuan Chwang's visit to India was beneficial for Harsha in one more context. Because of Yuan Chwang, he was successful in having very cordial relations with the Chinese Emperor Taitung. Harsha had sent a very intelligent and eligible priest as his envoy to the court of Chinese emperor. The Chinese Emperor also reciprocated by sending his envoy to Harsha's court.

It was Harsha's custom to donate alms every fifth year at the place of confluence of Ganga and Yamuna. A huge fair used to be held on that occasion. People of all religions and communities used to come from all over India to receive alms. All arrangements used to be made for stay and food for five lakh people. These donations continued for seventy five days. Everyday Harsha used to sit on his throne and monks of all religions received alms. Apart from this, he gave one hundred gold coins, one pearl, one cotton cloth, perfume and food to each of the ten thousand Buddhist monks. Within a month, Harsha's treasury used to be exhausted. Once a situation arose when Harsha had to even give away his clothes and ornaments which he was wearing. Harsha was very popular amongst his people because of his donations. Stories of his donations spread far and wide in all corners of India.

Harsha was an able and compassionate ruler. He was also a scholar and wrote several plays. They were-'Ratnavali', 'Priyadarshika' and 'Naganand'. Poet Baan Bhatt lived in his court and wrote a famous story called 'Kadambari'. Just like king Ashoka, Harsha was also a great and illustrious emperor of ancient India.

PULKESHIN - II

—Mangal Singh

THE Chalukya dynasty rose in the latter half of sixth century. This dynasty ruled for more than two hundred years and left indelible impressions. The most glorious ruler of this dynasty was Pulkeshin II. The meaning of Pulkeshin is - 'the great lion'. Pulkeshin was truly powerful and brave like a lion.

According to history, the name of the first man of this dynasty was Jaisingh. However, it was Pulkeshin I, the grandson of Jaisingh, who made Badami, a place in Bijapur, his Capital and started expanding his empire in all four directions. To develop Vatapipuri (Badami) as a strong fort was his first task. Kirtivarma, son of Pulkeshin I proved to be much more glorious than his father. He defeated the Kadambas of Vanwasi, Mauryas of Konkan and the Nals of Bastar. The famous port of Goa came under them after the victory over Konkan. Ships used to go from Goa to far off countries and return after earning lots of wealth. The treasure of Chalukya state increased day by day. Goa then, was called 'Kheti Dweep',-a reaping island.

Unfortunately, Kirtivarma died at a young age. All his sons were too young to rule at that time. So, Kirtivarma's brother, Mangalesh ruled as a guardian on behalf of Pulkeshin, the eldest son of Kirtivarma. Mangalesh carried forward the tradition of his dynasty to expand the kingdom. The dust of his horse-ridden soldiers engulfed the East and the Western directions upto the sea. He acquired lots of wealth for state's treasury by attacking king Budhraj of Kalchuri. At the same time there was a revolt in Konkan. He crushed this revolt with strict authority. He got constructed several famous temples near Badami. However, Mangalesh could not resist the innate lust for power.

In the beginning of his reign, Mangalesh always praised his elder

brother Kirtivarma. But now he was more eager to hear his own praises. In old age, his hatred towards Pulkeshin worsened. His court became a place of conspiracies.

Pulkeshin had grown up now. It was expected from Mangalesh to hand over the reins of power to the rightful heir and bring an end to internal strife. However, he hatched a conspiracy to make his own son the king and all efforts were made to prevent Pulkeshin to become the king. Pulkeshin was bent upon getting his rights. A conflict between the two was inevitable. Pulkeshin left the capital with his brothers and soon a civil war started between the uncle and nephew.

Pulkeshin won the war. However, this civil war proved to be very expensive for the Chalukya dynasty. Chalukya Empire was not even firmly established so far. The roots were not strong and the members of the dynasty were fighting among themselves. Could there have been a better opportunity for princes to restore their lost freedom ? Taking advantage of this opportunity, enemies in all directions declared themselves free. But Pulkeshin acted bravely justifying his name. One by one, he crushed all his enemies.

Political expediency requires that, one should move towards that enemy which is the weakest and against whom some other king is ready to fight along. Pulkeshin started his victory campaign following this policy. A feudal Chieftain named Niruhullak of the king of Maitraks had proclaimed freedom and usurped a part of the Lat state. His successor Appayik was very ambitious. Taking advantage of the civil war of Chalukyas he tried to capture some territories of Chalukya state. Another feudal lord called Govind helped him in this task. Pulkeshin signed a treaty with Shiladitya-the king of Maitrak against Aappayik. Aappayik was defeated and killed by the joint armies of Shiladitya and Pulkeshin at the banks of Bhimrathi river bank. Govind accepted the supremacy of Pulkeshin. Both the kings divided equally the state of Aappayik.

There was one more benefit of this treaty. Small disputes between Maitraks and Chalukyas which existed in some areas came to an end. Kalchuri also claimed control over Southern Gujarat and Northern Konkan. Now they left this state for

Chalukyas. Similarly, the Chalukyas accepted the control of Maitraks over the areas between the Sahya and Vindhya.

After this, Pulkeshin diverted his attention to other directions. The king of Kadamb dynasty of Vanwasi had accepted the supremacy of Pulkeshin's father. But he became free during the civil war. Pulkeshin attacked Vanwasi again and brought it under his rule. Alup Raja of South Karnataka and Gang Raja of Mysore also were forced to accept his supremacy.

Amongst these states the Gangs were very important. Pulkeshin made peace with Gang King in order to prevent any other trouble from him. The Gang King, 'Durvineet' married off his daughter to Pulkeshin. This Gang Princess gave birth to Vikramaditya I who became Pulkeshin's successor. When the condition of Chalukyas was precarious in their conflict with the Pallavas, the Gang King Durvineet had come to the rescue of his grandson. By now Pulkeshin had made his position very strong. It was only the Maurya king of North Konkan who had still raised the flag of rebellion. Dharapuri (Elephanta island) was his capital. At that time, Dharapuri was called the queen of Western seas. The maritime location of Dharapuri and the wealth earned through trade was the main reason of the strength of Mauryas. Due to this wealth, the Maurya King considered himself supreme. But even he could not stand before the power of Pulkeshin. He too had to accept Pulkeshin's supremacy.

After the defeat of Mauryas, internal situation of the state of Pulkeshin was very strong and now he was in a position to control entire South India. Two other States-Pallavas of Kanchi and Pandyas of Madura, in the South claimed to be his equals. They too were dreaming to gain control over the entire South-India. The Pallava State amongst them, was the immediate neighbour of Chalukya state. After planning for the attack over Pallavas, Pulkeshin made his younger brother the prince and left him in the capital. He himself marched with a huge army towards the Pallavas, after winning over South Kosal and Kalinga, because the attack by them from behind during his war with Pallavas could have been dangerous.

Between the Pallavas and Kalinga was the state of Vishnukundin dynasty. First war of Pulkeshin was with Vishnukundins and Pulkeshin won very easily. Now Pulkeshin had reached the border of the State of Pallavas. Mahendraverma I was the king of Pallavas. There has been no king more powerful and able than Mahendraverma in the Pallavas. He was not only a big constructor, musician and a poet, but also a tough warrior. But he too proved incapable of stopping Pulkeshin's attack. Crushing the Pallava State, Pulkeshin reached fourteen miles inside their capital. Mahendraverma ran away and took shelter in his capital. Despite all efforts, Pulkeshin was unsuccessful in defeating the Pallavas completely.

During the time when Pulkeshin was engrossed in the fight with Pallavas, the increasing control of Harsha in politics of North India created several problems which forced Pulkeshin to leave the war in between and return. He did acquire some northern areas of the Pallava State in this war. To ensure that Pallavas do not trouble him again, Pulkeshin made his brother Vishnuvardhan-the 'Subedar' of Andhra and sent him to live there.

At the time when Pulkeshin was winning in the South, Harshavardhan, with his power, had established a huge empire in the north. Most of North India had been included in Harshavardhan's empire. After this, Harsh turned his attention towards south. Even Pulkeshin, after strengthening himself in the South, was anxious to spread his empire towards the North after defeating the Pallavas. But the war was started by Harsha. Pulkeshin acted very intelligently in this war. He took into his fold support of Lats, Malwas and Gurjars. Thus, he extended his territory till the Mahanadi in the North.

To understand better the war between Harsha and Pulkeshin, it is necessary to understand the importance of Valabhi. Whichever king wanted to go from north to the south, or from the south to the north had to pass by Valabhi. The invader from the South had to cross Narmada or Mahanadi to move ahead towards North. The position of Valabhi was naturally important. Then, when Malawa and Gurjar States on the northern border of Narmada came under

King Pulkeshin, it became all the more essential for Harsha to take control over Valabhi. Harsha sent a peace proposal to its king, but he did not accept it. Harsha attacked and defeated the king of Valabhi who ran away and took the shelter of Gurjar king. The Gurjars were incapable of facing Harsha, but they were supported by Pulkeshin.

At that time, Harsha could not do any harm to Gurjars. But then he played a diplomatic game and brought Dhruvsen, the king of Valabhi, to his side by marrying off his daughter to him. After this, he immediately attacked Pulkeshin. Harsha's army suffered great loss in the war and he was defeated. This was his first defeat. Though Pulkeshin was victorious, the victory proved to be so expensive to him that he completely gave up all plans to expand his empire towards the north.

By defeating Harsha, Pulkeshin reached the zenith of his valour. He acquired the degree of 'Parmeshwar' by defeating Emperor Harsha of entire North India. But there was still energy left in the Pallavas of the South. Pulkeshin was well aware of the constant threat from the Pallavas. After freeing himself from the tensions of North India, Pulkeshin again diverted his attention towards the Pallavas. Mahendraverma had died by now and Narsimhaverma Mahamalla was the king in his place. Defeating the Pallavas, Pulkeshin again reached their capital. However, the Pallava king did not give up. Once or twice, he badly defeated Pulkeshin. At the end, Pulkeshin had to run away from there. But this time Narsimhaverma made a counter attack and crushing the Chalukya states reached upto their capital Vatapi. Possibly Pulkeshin was killed in this very war. Narsimhaverma acquired control over Vatapi and he got the title of 'Vatapikond', the winner of Vatapi.

Pulkeshin II was a great victor, warrior and builder of Empire. That is why he holds a high position in the Indian History.

SHANKARACHARYA

—Jagannath Prabhakar

IN the eighth century, there was a village named Kalandi in the state of Kerala in South India. This village was situated on the banks of river Purna. A priest named Shivguru lived there. He was a great scholar. Old age had descended but Shivguru had no issue. His wife Subhadra used to be sad, as she was child less. Shivgura remained uneasy.

Shivguru was a staunch devotee of Lord Shankar. He and his wife prayed to Lord Shankar with lot of devotion. It is said that Lord Shankar blessed the couple with a son. Since the boy was born as Lord Shankar's blessing, he was named Shankar. This boy grew up and became famous as Shankaracharya.

Shankaracharya was a talented child. He learnt by heart the stories of 'Puranas' told by his mother in childhood. On attaining three years his mundan (tonsure) ceremony was performed. Unfortunately, thereafter his father died.

Shankaracharya became an orphan at a young age of three. He had to face many problems. But even this could not take away the shine of Shankaracharya's talent. His thread ceremony was conducted when he was five years old after which Shankaracharya went to the 'Gurukul' to study.

The teacher was pleased with Shankaracharya's remarkable intelligence. He was deeply interested in the study of treatises. Along with this he used to observe the pathetic conditions prevailing in the country around him.

Shankaracharya lived in the Gurukul only for two years. He completed the study of 'Vedas', 'Vedanta' and 'Vedangas' during this period. After this, he returned home. At that time his age must have been about seven-eight years. His perception had widened. He could hear the cries of innumerable people being crushed by communal quarrels and different beliefs. The outcry of thousands

of people suffering from ignorance and superstitions was disturbing his heart. He decided to change the prevailing conditions in the country.

Shankar started contemplating to leave his home to fulfil this objective. The news of his intelligence and talent was spreading far and wide. The king of Malabar was a devotee of scholars. He wanted Shankaracharya to become the highest priest of his court. He sent a minister to Shankaracharya's place with an elephant and lots of money.

Shankaracharya did not accept this offer as he had to achieve higher tasks.

Alongwith the present, the minister had to return in despair. The king of Malabar heard about Shankar's sacrifice from the minister. He was amazed. He became curious to see Shankar. The very next day, he went in the service of Shankar and presented him with ten thousand coins and some books. But Shankar only accepted the books and did not take even a single coin.

After this incident, Shankar got tired of his home. He asked his mother's permission for renouncing the world. But the mother's heart could not give permission to her only son to leave the house. Shankaracharya's requests, logic, arguments could not convince his mother to let him go.

One day when Shankar entered for was bathing in the river, a crocodile caught him. His mother was standing on the river bank. She started screaming on seeing her son in trouble. Then Shankar said, "If you permit me to leave home and become an ascetic, the crocodile will leave me."

She did not have any option but to give the permission. It is said that the crocodile let Shankar go after he got her permission.

Now Shankarcharya left home and reached the banks of Narmada river. There he took initiation for renouncing the world from Swami Govind Bhagwatpada. After this, he started spiritual endeavour according to the manner taught by his teacher. In little time he achieved 'Siddhi' in 'Yoga'. He also thoroughly studied

monism. His teacher was happy and instructed him to go to Kashi and write a commentary of 'Vedanta Sutra'.

Shankaracharya followed the orders by reaching Kashi (Benares). The fame of his talent spread in Kashi very soon. People were attracted to him. Many became his disciples of whom Padmapadacharya's name is worth mentioning. Thus, Shankaracharya taught several students and also wrote treatises. Gradually, he started to contest the mistakes and shortcomings of various sects and challenged the superstitions. He had debates with priests. Shankar, the propagator of love, unity and monism, won every debate.

Shankaracharya now started wandering to propagate Vedanta. It was not an easy task. There were no trains, cars or aeroplanes then. One had to travel only on foot. Crossing jungles, mountains, rivers on foot he reached to different corners of the country and held debates with people of different religions and sects at different places. Accomplished and big scholars had to accept defeat in front of Shankaracharya's talent. Hundreds and thousands of young people became his disciples. Lakhs of people accepted his religions sect.

Thus, victorious Shankaracharya went from one place to another advancing like a hurricane. He explained to people that renunciation did not mean that people should sit idle after becoming an ascetic. He said that the real meaning of renunciation was to get rid of selfishness and to always work for the welfare of humanity. Shankaracharya used to propagate Advaita (Monism).

Those days Buddhism and Jainism were flourishing. But the followers of both these religions were drifting from the true teachings and principles of their religions. They were also in conflict with the ancient Vedic religion of India. Then, there used to be conflict between the followers of Buddhism and Jainism. Hence, Shankaracharya gave special attention to them. He wanted to bridge the wide gap of conflict and present to the world the right form of Vedic religion.

With this objective he went to a scholar named Kumaril Bhatt. Kumaril Bhatt was a critic and a follower of Vedic religion. Apart

from being a scholar of Vedas he was also an expert on treatises of Buddhism and Jainism. Shankaracharya considered him as his supporter. But when he reached Kumaril Bhatt, he was prepared to go into the last trance. Hence, he advised Shankar to go to Mandan Mishra. Mandan Mishra was the main disciple of Kumaril Bhatt. His erudition was famous far and wide. Shankaracharya defeated Mandan Mishra and his highly intelligent wife in a religious debate. Mandan Mishra became Shankar's disciple.

Now Shankaracharya started going from one place to another defeating scholars of Buddhism, Jainism and other sects in religious debates. He went up to Gandhar, Kashmir, Kamboj and Takshshila along with his disciples. Buddhism flourished in these states. But Shankaracharya re-established the Vedanta sect in those places. He also went to Bengal and Bihar, to main centres of Buddhists- Nalanda, Rajgrih and Gaya, and to Kamrup, Nepal, North Gujarat, Kathiawar and Madhya Pradesh, North India and South India. The conclusion is, that he reached all corners of the country. He travelled to all religious places. Everywhere he defeated religious teachers of various sects and established his own sect. He established several temples, monasteries and hermitages. He was successful in bringing about friendship and peace amongst Buddhists and followers of Vedic religion.

While propagating his sect, Shankaracharya had to face several challenges from his opponents. Many Kapaliks lived in Karnataka. They used to sacrifice humans and offer the heads to God. When Shankaracharya reached Karnataka, the Kapaliks attacked him and his disciples. But Shankaracharya and his disciples were fearless and always ready to give up their lives. Hence, Kapaliks could not harm them.

Shankaracharya's willingness to sacrifice was such that he had no attachment even for his body. An incident is narrated in this regard. Once Shankaracharya was sitting alone. One Kapalik came near him. He requested, "Lord! you are a great metaphysician. You don't have any affection for your body. But I need a head of a human for my worship. My task will be completed if you give me your head."

Shankaracharya said, "All right. I will start my meditation, you can behead me."

Shankar started meditating. Kapalik drank liquor and came with a trident. He was just about to cut his head when Shri Padampad came there and saved Shankar.

Shankar won over his opponents with truth, nonviolence and high ideals. He set up an empire of peace, unity and true knowledge. To protect and look after his religious empire, Shankaracharya established four big monasteries. These monasteries have played an important role in bringing about religious and cultural unity in India. Shankaracharya created these centers at Dwarka, Jagannathpuri, Badrinath and Mysore and posted one disciple at each place.

Shankaracharya's work does not end here. He wrote several Sanskrit treatises. These include authentic commentaries of twelve Upanishads such as 'Brahmasutrabhashya', 'Ish', 'Ken', 'Kath', etc.—'Gitabhashya', 'Sarvavedanta-Siddhant Sangrah', 'Vivek Chudamani', 'Prabhodhsudhakar' and several other famous books. He accomplished all this work only at the age of thirty two years. After that his life came to an end.

AANDAL

—Sita Raman

IN the ninth century a very famous saint poetess was born in South India. Her name was Aandal. Aandal is known as the 'Mira' of South India. Just like Mirabai, she too was a devotee of Lord Krishna. She also composed several poems on Sri Krishna like Mirabai.

There is a town called Madurai in South India. It is known as South Mathura. In ancient times, Tamil King Pandiyan used to rule Madurai. There is a village Shrivilliputar near Madurai. A brahman devotee of Vishnu named Vishnuchitta lived here. He used to spend most of his time in the service of Shri Krishna. He had grown a beautiful flower garden with whose flowers he used to worship Krishna. He had no child. Due to this Vishnuchitta and his wife used to remain unhappy. Both used to pray for a child.

At the end Lord was pleased. One day Vishnuchitta was watering plants of his flower garden, when he saw a beautiful girl lying under the tulsi (basil) plant. Vishnuchitta was happy to see that small girl. Both of them named her "Kaude" and reared her with lots of love. This very girl later on became famous as Aandal.

'Kaude' loved Shri Krishna right from her childhood. She never used to have her food before she had worshipped Shri Krishna. Everyday she used to pick up fresh flowers from the garden and spent most of her time in the worship of the Lord. She was intelligent and good in studies also. She used to compose and read out beautiful poems on Sri Krishna from her childhood. Her parents, joys knew no bound on seeing the girl's devotion for Shri Krishna.

When Kaude grew up, she used to meditate for hours everyday. Sometimes she would recite the poems composed by her to worship Shri Krishna. Overwhelmed with devotion, she did not even bother about her food during her worship.

Vishnuchitta used to make four-five garlands daily for Shri Krishna. Kaude, hiding from everyone would first wear those garlands herself and feel happy seeing herself in the mirror. Later, quietly she would take the garlands off and keep them as before. Vishnuchitta did not know that Kaude was using the garlands and defiling them even before they were offered to the Lord. One day, Vishnuchitta went to the temple with the garlands. When that priest picked them up to adorn the Lord they seemed to be dried. He saw a strand of long hair in one of the garlands.

When Vishnuchitta came to know about this, he was very sad and asked for forgiveness from God. There were such stories daily. Everyday the flowers seemed dried and Vishnuchitta remained sad.

Coincidentally, once when Kaude was wearing a garland, Vishnuchitta came there. Seeing his daughter wearing the garland he asked, "My child ! What are you doing ? This is God's garland. We must not wear it. Don't do this in future."

Having said this, Vishnuchitta prepared new garlands and took them to the temple. But while they were putting around the garlands, they broke into pieces and fell. Vishnuchitta was scared. He thought that God was angry with him.

Suddenly Vishnuchitta heard a voice, "O my devotee, I will only wear those garlands which have already been worn by your daughter Kaude."

Vishnuchitta was confused on hearing this. He narrated all the events to his wife. Now both the husband and wife treated their daughter with respect thinking her to be reincarnation of Goddess.

Subsequently Kaude's devotion increased. On getting up in the morning, she would go to the place of worship in her home, compose and recite poems filled with devotion for Lord Shri Krishna. This way she composed innumerable poems. These poems are called "Aandal Paasurangal" in Tamil. Devotees of Vishnu were amazed to see the expressions in these poems.

One day Lord Krishna came in Vishnuchitta's dream and said, "the goddess in your home is my Lakshmi. I have sent her to your

place because of your devotion for me. My Goddess Lakshmi will soon come back to me. You don't worry. For some more years, you remain in this world and teach the true path of devotion to the people. In the end, you will also come here."

On waking up, Vishnuchitta was disturbed remembering the dream. There, Kaude also had dreamt of her marriage to Krishna. When Kaude told Vishnuchitta about her dream, he was all the more worried. He went on with Kaude to visit the Vaishnava religious places.

But Kaude by now was in love with Lord Krishna. She always thought of him. Finally, Vishnuchitta reached Shrirangam along with Kaude. It is said that on seeing the statue of Lord Ranganath, Kaude was overwhelmed and went near the statue. At the same time people saw a light coming out of the statue dazzling everyone. Kaude vanished suddenly as if she had entered the statue. Thus Vishnuchitta's dream came true and Kaude, reared by lots of love, went back to her Lord at the end.

Kaude was her pet name. Otherwise, her name was Aandal. Aandal means, the person who has been emancipated.

The Margshirsha month is considered to be an auspicious month in Tamil Nadu. During this month, men and women get up early to worship Vishnu and sing devotional songs. These include the songs written by Aandal which are sung with great love. Those who worship Vishnu, dress up their daughters as Aandal and make them dance in front of God. The devotional songs of Aandal are called "Tiruppavai". The people of Tamil Nadu believe that God is pleased by singing 'Tiruppavai'. This is the reason why devotional songs composed by Aandal are sung there in homes. Just as devotional songs composed by Surdas and Mira are popular in North India, there is prevalence of Aandal's devotional songs written in devotion for Krishna in South India.

RAJRAJA CHOLA

—R.N. Tiwari

THERE have been many illustrious kings in India from time to time. Out of such kings, whose name we remember, was the glorious king Rajraja Chol of South India. He ruled from the year 985 to 1014.

Before becoming the king, Rajraja was a prince for sixteen years. When he sat on the throne, the Chola state was very small. Velaru river in the north and another river of the same name in the South marked the border of the state. The sea was in the East and Kottaikarai was in the West. The state of Rajraja Chola was confined to modern Tanjore, Tiruchirapalli and some parts of former Pudukkotta. However, his state had spread a lot by the time of his death. With his valour he expanded the Chola state till the northern part of island of Lanka, Madurai, Malabar, Maldives, Mysore, Bellary and upto Guntur in Eastern India. He would have earned an important place in history only because of his valour, but he was equally an able administrator also. His fame spread not just because he was victorious, but also because he was an able ruler.

Rajraja Chola was of Vijayalaya dynasty. Its first king, Maharaj Vijayalaya founded the Chola state in the year 850. Rajraj I was the eighth king of this dynasty.

The kings of Vijayalaya lineage were from the warrior community. Rajraja Chola was the star and torchbearer of this lineage. The inscriptions available of the kings of Vijayalaya lineage have stressed again and again that the kings of this clan were from the Kshatriya (warrior) communities.

After ascending the throne, Rajraja Chola was engaged for four years in improving upon the administration of his state. Then he diverted his attention towards the expansion of his state. He started his victory campaign from the South and concluded it in the North.

The reason was that three states of South India together used to harass the Chola State from time to time. Hence, it was essential to take care of these three States. With this objective, he defeated and imprisoned the Pandya ruler, King Amarbhujang, and raised his victory flag in his capital Vilind. He included Pandya in his State.

After dealing with the Pandya State, Rajraja Chola invaded Lanka with his navy and included its northern areas within his State. His victory of Lanka has been described very interestingly in one of the inscriptions which is as follows:

"Ramchandra built a bridge on the ocean with the help of monkeys and then destroyed the King of Lanka with great difficulty by using his fierce arrows. But Rajraja Chola I was even greater than Ramchandra. His fierce army, after crossing the ocean by ships, crushed the king of Lanka."

Before Rajraja Chola's invasion, Anuradhpur had been the capital of Lanka for thousands of years. The armies of Rajraja Chola ruined Anuradhpur. The part of Lanka which was won by Rajraja Chola became a part of the empire of Cholas. The capital of this part was in Polonnaruv. Though Rajraja Chola's control was only on the northern part of Lanka, he wanted to include the entire island in his State. With this objective he shifted his Capital from Anuradhpur to Polonnaruv. He changed its name to Jananath-Mangalam. Here he constructed a Shiva temple, which still exists. The name of this temple is 'Shivdevalaya'.

After a long time, when the king of Lanka, Vijaybahu ended the rule of Cholas from northern part of Lanka, he also made Polonnaruv his capital. But he changed the name of Polonnaruv to Vijayrajpur. The impact of victory of Rajraja Chola over Lanka was that the capital of Lanka changed permanently from Anuradhpur.

Thus, Rajraja Chola insulted his two strong neighbouring states of Pandya and Lanka. Now the Kerala state had to be defeated. Rajraja Chola destroyed the naval fleet of Kerala in a sea-borne war near Kandlur and then defeated the army of Kerala in the war near Vilinam. Rajraja made Kerala a part of his state.

The result of these wars was that Rajraja Chola now had no threat from the state of Lanka, Kerala and Pandya.

Now Rajraja looked towards the two states on Western Coast of India. One of them was ruled by Chalukyas of the West and the other was ruled by the Gung Kings. Rajraja Chola defeated these two states and included them in his state. Hence, the areas of Mysore and Bellary became part of the Chola State.

He had to still deal with the Chalukyas of the East. They ruled on the Vengi State. There was internal conflict and rift in Vengi. Rajraja Chola acted very cleverly. Under the pretext of ending the fights for the throne of Vengi, he interfered in the affairs of Vengi and made Shaktiverma sit on the throne of Vengi. Rajraja Chola married off his daughter to the younger brother of Shaktiverma. The Chalukyas of Vengi became friends of the Chola kings. Rajraja attacked Kalinga, the enemies of Vengi state, and won it.

In this manner, the empire of Rajraja Chola spread far and wide. It was his single handed rule in the entire South India on the other side of Tungbhadra river.

Rajraja had organized a fierce army. To increase his maritime power, he prepared a strong and powerful fleet of warships. He had won Lanka with this. Later, the same fleet of warships helped him win the Maldives and included it in the Chola state.

Two years before his death, Rajraja Chola made his son Rajendra the crown prince who ascended on the throne in 1014 after the death of his father by the name of Rajendra I and ruled the Chola Empire for thirty years.

Rajraja Chola was not only a powerful ruler and a victor, but was also extremely religious and fond of arts. He was a strong devotee of Shiva. He ordered the construction of the huge Shiva temple-"Rajrajeshwar" in Tanjore. This illustrious king left no stone unturned for the construction of this temple. His desire was to see that this Shiva temple was unique. Truly, this Rajrajeshwar temple is unique. It is a beautiful example of Tamil architecture.

It is not that difficult to win a war, as compared to consolidation and good governance of the States won during the war. Rajraja's

name is at the top in Indian History. There are not many examples in Indian History of the kind of organization of army and administration of the State as done by Rajraja Chola. Without any hitch, it can be said that Rajraja Chola was the best amongst all the kings of Vijayalaya lineage.

It is well known that for the calculation of land revenue of fields, it is essential to correctly measure the land and estimate the produce. In this respect Rajraja Chola's administration is considered to be an ideal one. This illustrious king always paid attention on improving upon the administrative system. There were efficient inspectors to keep a watch on local rulers. There were Panchayats of different professions like trader and artisans etc in villages, districts and towns. These Panchayats and other institutions had full freedom to operate. However, there were independent auditors to inspect the statements of income and expenses, whose objective was to draw the attention of the king towards wasteful expenditure of these institutions.

Rajraja Chola was a follower of Shaiva sect. However, he had a liberal policy in religious matters and he gave equal assistance to all religious groups. If he constructed a Shiva temple in Tanjore, he also constructed Vishnu temples at various places. Similarly, he gave assistance to Buddhist monasteries also.

His behaviour toward the members of his family was equal. His love for his sister Kundbai and regards for his cousin's grandmother is an evidence of this behaviour. Rajraja Chola married many times and he had several wives. However, he had very few children.

People believed that Rajraja Chola was a reincarnation of Vishnu and his minister Jayant was compared to Brihaspati. This is a proof of how popular Rajraja Chola was amongst his people. The name of Rajraja Chola exists amongst the list of great rulers of India.



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